ISSN 1364-6923

- September -

Hot Spring

A Journal of Commitment

Edinburgh! Here they come!

What did the Canadian Judge say?

The making of a national tragedy
- S. Sathananthan

Human Rights Violations in the Batti district
- Joseph Pararajasingham

Devolution in the U.K. and Sri Lanka
- Adrian Wijemanne

Letter to British M.P.s
- Dr. Shiamala

Peace of the poisonous kind
- Kothai

Operation "Jeya Sikiru" A military dead-end

Letters from India and Malaysia

Jubilee Circuits
Technology

Specialists in Printed Circuit Boards

- Designs
- Conventional PTH Multilayers
- 8 Hours Prototpye
- Bare Board Testing

- Assembly Testing
- Packaging Services
- Small Run and Production Run

Modem: 0181 543 1076
Email: 100656.1342@compuserve.com
Tel: + 44 (0) 181 540 7772
Fax: + 44 (0) 181 540 1114

York House, 1 York Road, Wimbledon, London SW19 8TP

Hot Spring
A Journal of commitment

Vol: 2 N°: 8 September 1997

Editor
S.Sivanayagam

HOT SPRING
P.O.Box 14258
London
SW16 6ZU
UK

Fax: + 44 (0) 181 696 7761

e-mail:
editor.hotspring@virgin.net

Published by
Melrose Publications Ltd.
U.K.

Price: £1

Annual subscription rates:

UK / India / Sri Lanka:	*£18 / US $30*
Australia:	*Aus $50*
Canada:	*Canada $45*
USA:	*US $40*
All other countries:	*£20 / US$ 40*

(all inclusive of postage)

Cheques to be drawn in favour of Melrose Publications Ltd.

The views expressed by contributors do not necessarily reflect those of the editor or the publishers

Comment

Edinburgh ! Here they come !

A special train load of 600 Tamil men, women and children will be arriving at Edinburgh on Saturday 25th October; to link their hands in friendship with the Scottish people, who only a month ago had given a sweeping referendum result that transformed the British political landscape.

Scottish nationalist leader Alex Salmond said: "We will shortly begin work on our manifesto but I can say right now that its centrepiece will be the pursuit of an independent Scotland. I have no doubt we will achieve that aim within my own lifetime".

To the Eelam Tamils who decided on an independent state at a democratically held elections as early as TWENTY YEARS ago,(1977) and who because of that continue to be persecuted, this journey to Scotland will be a refreshing reminder how democratic and humane values prevail in the Britain.

The Eelam Tamil visitors to Scotland will also get a glimpse of Edinburgh at a time when this city is hosting the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM). Fifty heads of government are expected to participate, including Queen Elizabeth and South African President Nelson Mandela, not to forget Sri Lanka's Chandrika Kumaratunga herself.

The Eelam-Scotland Friendship train leaves Kings Cross station at 7 a.m. and will travel to Edinburgh with one stop at Potters Bar (7.15 a.m.) It is scheduled to arrive in Edinburgh, Waverley at 12 noon. Participants will go in procession possibly preceded by Nathaswaram and or Bagpipe music to the marquee.

The return journey will be at 5 p.m. from Edinburgh, and scheduled to arrive in London at 10.30 p.m., again with a stop at Potters Bar. Two meals and beverages will be served in the train.

The Commonwealth is held out to be "a unique family of 53 member countries around the world whose principal aims are to ADVANCE DEMOCRACY AND GOOD GOVERNMENT, HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE RULE OF LAW as well as sustainable economic and social development".

Since the Commonwealth heads meet as an informal"family,"the question as to how far one member of the family - Sri Lanka - advances "democracy", "good government" "Human Rights" and the "Rule of Law" will certainly not be taken up for discussion!

Thousands of visitors from around the world, including up to 2,000 representatives of the international media, will accompany the heads of government. A programme of arts, sports, educational cultural and public events is being organised with one vital aim: to show Edinburgh in the best possible light.

A special event will be the presenting of the Freedom of the City of Edinburgh - the highest honour that the city of Edinburgh can bestow - to President Mandela.

The visitors will also view a Tamil cultural display in a marquee in "The Rooftop" (Plaza area of the Waverley Shopping Centre) A Scottish MP will hoist the Union Jack, the Scottish flag and the Eelam flag. ■

Subscribers outside U.K. Please note:
*Mode of payment is by: (1)Bank Draft : (2)International money order : (3)Cheque drawn on a U.K. bank account. Cheques and Tranfers payable to **Melrose Publications Ltd.***
- Thank you -

What They Say

"The government claims that the military campaign is only against the LTTE to liberate the Tamil people, but in reality. it is waging a war against us, our children, and our future. This war destroys our homes, properties and livelihoods, and we are bombed and shelled in our own places. while the economic assets of our community are pillaged and destroyed in a deliberate policy of pauperization...."

- Appeal sent to UN Secretary General Kofi Annan by the Action Group of Tamils in Colombo (AGOTIC)

* * * * *

"Total peace near at hand.."

- WEEKEND EXPRESS headline quoting War Minister Anuruddha Ratwatte

* * * * *

"Any military analyst with even a modicum of talent will tell you that the war is drifting aimlessly on an ad hoc or day to day basis, like a ship without a rudder, with the captain hoping and praying that something will eventually work out to redeem a tarnished image..."

- Air Vice Marshal Harry Goonetileke, WEEKEND EXPRESS

* * * * *

"Sri Lankan military has no resources to win this war. LTTE has significant military capabilities and have demonstrated its powers.... A cease-fire with the LTTE is paramount, if Sri Lanka intends to find a lasting solution. Otherwise this war will go on".

- Professor Michael E. Brown, Associate Director International Security Program, U.S. on a visit to Colombo. THE ISLAND, Sept. 21.

* * * * *

"You hold yourself to be speaking for the Tamils. No Sirs, the salvation of the Tamils will dawn only when slaves like you are removed by the Tamils, lock, stock and barrel from the political firmament of this country".

- Tamil Congress leader Kumar Ponnambalam, in an open letter to TULF leaders in Colombo SUNDAY TIMES, Colombo, Sept. 14

"The era that everybody was getting everything free must stop ....The government resources are limited and becomes poorer because of escalating defence expenditure.."

-

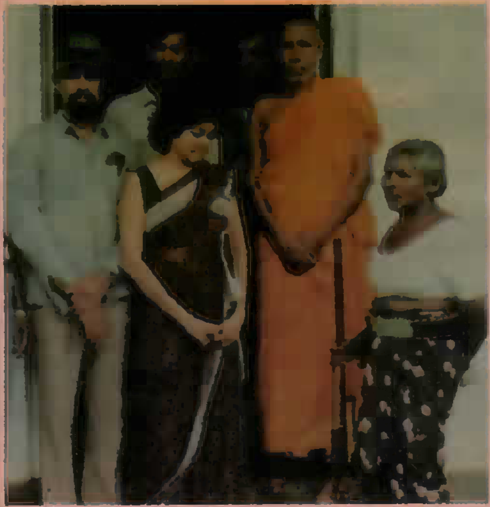
President Chandrika Kumaratunga, after opening the Pelawatte Golf Course, "with a lusty swing of her club " (THE ISLAND, Sept.21)

* * * * *

"Bandaranaike (President Chandrika's father) was christened by the Bishop of Colombo. Reginald Stephen Copelston. a very intelligent man. He was called "Solomon", after his father. West-Ridgeway after the Governor and "Dias Bandaranaike" after the family name..."

- M.A.de Silva, SUNDAY OBSERVER, Colombo,Sept. 21

* * * * *



Penny Jayawardena, pictured with her husband (on the right), a Buddhist monk and a woman with gun.

"Thaththa (J.R.Jayawardene) and I had long talks on Sri Sathya Sai Baba. Swami gave him this chain and pendant and after his death, I took it back to Swami. Swami came to me and said "he is no more" and took this beaded chain I am wearing. He blessed each and every bead and the pendant and put it on me. Swami also gave a lingum to Thaththa which I gave him and he blessed and returned to me. It is in my prayer room at home ..."

- Penny, wife of Ravi Jayawardene, and second daughter-in-law of J.R.Jayawardene. talking to Roshan Peiris, SUNDAY TIMES, Sept.21

* * * * *

"Tamil people in Sri Lanka suffer from discrimination, may be persecution too"

Canadian judge in the Suresh case

The following is the order given by Mr.Justice Teitelbaum on August 29, 1997 in the immigration case concerning Manickavasagam SURESH in the Federal Court of Canada in Ottawa.

Since mischievous attempts have been made by Sri Lankan government agents and sections of the Colombo Press to present a distorted picture of the contents of the order, HOT SPRING publishes here the order made by Justice Teitelbaum in toto. As could be seen there was only one reference to the LTTE on the question of whether Suresh was a member of the organisation or not, and none whatever to "terrorism". The word "terrorism" occurs nowhere in the order; whatever buzz about"terrorism" that THE ISLAND heard was only caused by the bee in the bonnet of Foreign Minister Kadirgamar and his henchman in the U.N. H.L.de Silva P.C. !

- Editor. Hot Spring

I think that it would be unfair to Mr Suresh if I didn't give you my decision with regard to the issue of the Certificates immediately ,but not the Reasons, because the Reasons are going to require a lot of work.

Ms.Jackman, I spent the summer or a good part of the summer going through the Material and following your argument, because every time that you appear before me I know that I really have to do my home work , because I find that you do such a thorough job. But, notwithstanding that,I wrote some notes yesterday and this morning,and what I have heard this morning dosen't in any way, make me change my mind as to my finding. My notes read;

A Certificate based on a security intelligence Report prepared by CSIS indicating that Mr.Suresh is inadmissible to Canada under section 19(1)(c)(iv)(C),19(I)(f)(11)and 19(f)(f)(iii)(B)of the Immigration Act was signed by the Solicitor General of Canada on August the 1st ,1995 and by the Minister of citizenship and immigration on September 11th 1995. Pursuant to section 40.1(1)of the Immigration Act...well, not in accordance with subsection 40.1(3)of the Act, the Certificate was referred to the Federal Court of Canada on October 17th , 1995 and pursuant in 40.1(2)(b) of the Immigration Act ,the Respondent. Mr. Suresh, was detained on October the 18th, 1995. On the same day, notice of the section 40.1 proceedings was served on Mr.Suresh , according to subsection 40.1 (3)(b) of the act.

On October 23rd,1995, in accordance with subsection 40.1(4)(a)of the Act, I convened an in Camera hearing at which hearing I considered the security intelligence Report and additional evidence submitted on behalf of the Ministers. I then, pursuant to subsection 40.1 (4) (b) of the act, ordered that a summary of the report and evidence be served on Mr. Suresh and that Mr. Suresh be given an opportunity to be heard.

The summary of the report and evidence was served on Mr. Suresh on October 27th, 1995. The hearing wherein Mr. Suresh was given the opportunity to be heard commenced on March the 19th, 1996. More than 50 days of hearing have taken place.

I am satisfied that the issue that I have to decide and that I have decided is, as stated by the Applicant in their

Ms.Barbara Jackman, Defence attorney:

Tribute from the Judge

submission, the certificate naming Mr. Suresh as an inadmissible person under Section 19(1)(e)(iv)(c), 19(1)(f)(ii)(b) of the act are reasonable on the basis of the evidence and information made available to me in both the public and in camera hearings held before me.

“... It is not my function as a judge, ... to determine, based on the evidence before me, whether the Tamil people in Sri Lanka should or should not be granted their own homeland...”

The hearings held before me are directed solely and exclusively to determining the reasonableness of the Ministerial Certificate identifying Mr. Suresh as a member of an inadmissible class of persons, I can do no better than quote Mr. Justice Denault in the case of Baroud where he states;

“...The role of this Court is not to substitute its decision for that of the Minister and the Solicitor General, nor is it to find that they were correct in their assesmont of the evidence presented to them, but, rather, to find whether or not based on the information and evidence presented to this Court , the Minister's certificate is a reasonable one...”

I would add that it is, as well, not the function of this court to solve political issues that exist between groups of people in another county. It is not my function as a judge of the federal court of Canada, and I have said this many time, to determine, based on the evidence before me, whether the Tamil people in Sri Lanka should or should not be granted their own homeland or even to express an opinion on that subject. That is a political question to be determined by the people of Sri Lanka, together with the help of the United Nations and other nations of goodwill.

I can say and I do say that, based on the evidence made before me, the Tamil people of Sri Lanka suffer from discrimination, and based on some of the evidence made before me, may have suffered, in certain specific cases, from what may be considered, persecution. As I have stated, I am here to determine whether there exists sufficient evidence for me to conclude as to the reasonableness of the certificate signed by the ministers. It is not to determine whether the ministers were correct in their assessment of the evidence.

From the evidence presented to me, I cannot but come to any other conclusion than that, based on evidence presented both in the in camera hearing and in the public hearings, it was reasonable for the Ministers to conclude that Mr.Suresh is a person inadmissible into Canada.

It is my intention to release more detailed reasons at later date. I have decided to release my Decision without detailed reasons at this time because of the fact Mr. Suresh has been detained since October 1995, and because, pursuant to section 40.1 (7), Mr.Suresh will continue to be detained until remove from Canada. I believe this should be done as quickly as possible so as to avoid Mr.Suresh retunining in detention unnecessarlly, and to avoid lengthy proccedings pursuant to subsection 40.1 (8) of the Act.

“...All I do say is that I am satisfied that there were reasonable grounds for the Minister to believe as they did. That does not nessarily mean that what they believe is a fact...”

I also want to add the folowing from the evidence....I do not want to say anything that may affect Mr.Suresh if and when he will be removed from Canada. So, all I do say is that I am satisfied that there were reasonable grounds for the Minister to believe as they did. That does not nessarily mean that what they believe is a fact, but that there were reasonable grounds for the Minister to believe that Mr. Suresh is and was a member of the LTTE. I heard much evidence as to what to makes a member, when does one become a member. I am satisfied from the evidence that I heard that there were reasonable grounds to believe that he was member of the LTTE.

I intend to issue detailed Reason to cover most, if not all, of the issue that were presented to me by Ms.Jackman and I, too, don't envy my own position. But I also believe that there are many issues that were raised by Ms. Jackman that have to be clarified. Because this will take me a good period of time, I decided thet I don't want to leave the case in abeyance in the sense that Mr. Suresh should not know what his position is.

Having said all that, I would like to thank Ms. Jackman and I would like to thank Mr. Vaillancourd. I would like to thank you both for a most professional job. I truly appreciate having had the privillage, and am saying this for the second time, I think, or maybe even the third to Ms.Jackman, for having the privillage of having both of you plead before me. Thank you very much. This makes my job difficult, but, as well, pleasurable.

“ Max M Teltebaum”

****

JUDGE

SRI LANKA: WHITHER A COMMUNITY OF PRINCIPLED MEN AND WOMEN?

The making of a national tragedy

S Sathananthan

In a recent article titled "Professionals and the fear of getting involved" (Island, 6 August 1997), Mr Stanley Jayaweera lamented that "the country is in shambles". According to Mr Jayaweera, the primary manifestation of this "tragedy is that society as a whole has failed to throw up a community of principled men [and women] who can stand up to our rampaging politicians and put them in their place." He attributed numerous reasons for this appalling state of affairs. They ranged from educational institutions which "miserably failed", the prevailing "I-don't-want-to-get-involved" syndrome adversely affecting public life, to "[negative] child-rearing practices" in Sri Lankan homes. With much breast-beating he called for "men who can think deeply and feel deeply".

The reasons he identified may have some relevance. But his analysis, I would argue, does not reach the roots of the problem. We must know where we came from in order to understand where we are going. The "tragedy" he bemoans did not materialise overnight out of thin air. It has a tortuous history which began in the early 1950s with Mr SWRD Bandaranaike's disastrous policy of making the Sinhala language the sole official language of the country, popularly known as the Sinhala Only policy.

The shattering impact of that policy upon the Tamil community over the past four decades is well known. The economic marginalisation and political alienation of Tamils (with the exception of a few individuals and families of the Tamil political elite who benefited from, and collaborated with, the Sinhalese-dominated State), the strengthening of Tamil nationalism, the emergence of non-violent Tamil agitation for the decentralisation of political authority through District Councils, the metamorphosis of non-violent resistance into armed struggle by Tamil militant groups committed to the creation of an independent Tamil State of Tamil Eelam, and the ongoing civil war could all be traced historically to the politically bankrupt Sinhala Only policy.

S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike: *Disastrous policy*

But what is relevant, in the context of Mr Jayaweera's article, is the impact of Sinhala Only policy upon the Sinhalese people. During the campaign for the 1956 parliamentary elections, Mr Bandaranaike addressed a public meeting in Colombo. In the course of his address he flatly declared: "We will make Sinhala the official language in twenty four hours." And he added with a flourish: "after that even the white men (suddho), who come to our land must first learn Sinhala to do business here". In other words, the Sinhalese people need not learn the English language to communicate with the world; the world would learn the Sinhala language to reach out to the Sinhalese! The Sinhalese crowd went delirious and cheered Mr Bandaranaike non-stop for several minutes; and his Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) won the elections and secured an unprecedented parliamentary majority.

The rhetoric of course pandered to Sinhalese linguistic nationalism. But the Sinhala Only policy conveyed a potent multi-faceted message to the Sinhalese people, especially to its youth. They were made to believe that the hegemony of the English language - the kaduwa (literally, the sword) - is over. More specifically the policy encouraged the vast rural Sinhalese middle class to interpret Sinhala Only to mean the following. The youth could learn in the Sinhala language medium, safely forego a knowledge of the English language, and study virtually any subject (excluding English language) in school or university. Thereafter the world would be their oyster!

English language was removed from the list of compulsory subjects students are required to pass at the General Certificate of Education (Ordinary Level) Examination. The programme for the teaching of English language in government schools was all but dismantled. Numerous teachers of English language, most of whom possessed decades of valuable experience, were made redundant and many migrated to countries as diverse and Brunei and Zambia in search of employment. Private schools, which cater to educational needs of the children of the elite, of course continued the teaching of English language.

The first post-Bandaranaike generation of Sinhalese rural youth, those who came out of schools and universities during the late 1950s and throughout the 1960s, found to their horror that the promised Sinhalese Only utopia did not exist. They were dismayed at being confined to the non-English speaking underclass. They confronted the reality that lucrative economic opportunities and upward social mobility pivotally depended, as before, upon a working knowledge of the English language; that it was to late in the day for them to acquire competence in English; and that they are hopelessly trapped in the Sinhala Only ghetto. In short they were condemned to be the next generation of victims of the kaduwa, to be ruled over as ruthlessly as ever by the anglicised upper class. They deeply resented the betrayal by the Sinhalese upper class which had made sure that its own next generation would be proficient in English.

Consequently, in the late 1960s the first post-Bandaranaike rural Sinhalese generation went to the wall. The politicised segments of its middle class saw no alternative but to overthrow the domination of kaduwa, which symbolised to them the economic exploitation and social exclusion of the non-English speaking Sinhalese population. They began organising for armed struggle against the State under the banner of the Jathika Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP). They launched the 1971 Insurrection.

During the Insurrection, the United Front (UF) regime led by Mr Bandaranaike's widow, Mrs Sirimavo Bandaranaike, put to death a conservatively estimated twenty thousand young Sinhalese men and women. Their only crime was to have honestly believed in the Sinhala Only utopia cynically sold to them by her late husband in return for votes. The UF killed the politically conscious and intellectually active cream of the first post-Bandaranaike generation who, if not for the folly of Sinhala Only, would in all likelihood have blossomed into the "community of principled men [and women]" Mr Jayaweera yearned for.

Mrs. Srimavo Bandaranaike
The widow who put to death 20,000 young Sinhalese

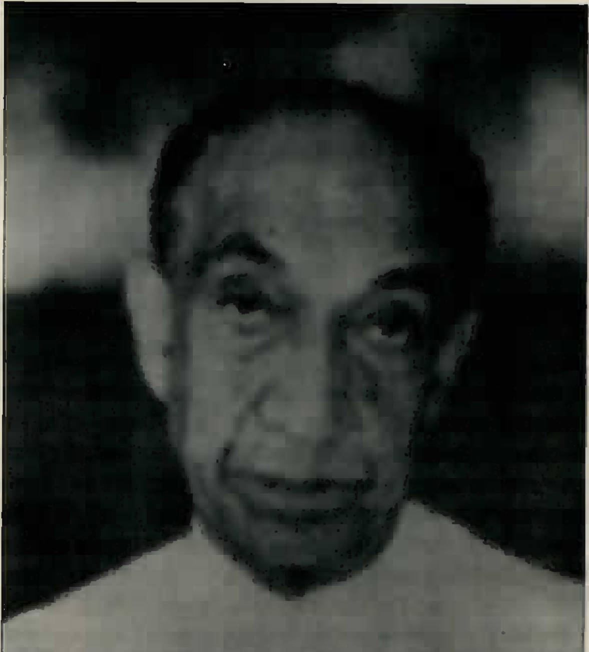
Liberalisation of the economy from 1978 onwards attracted more foreign entrepreneurs. They, rather than learn Sinhala as Mr Bandaranaike had expansively predicted, demanded instead literacy in English from Sri Lankans as a necessary condition for employment in white collar jobs, especially at managerial levels. National entrepreneurs seeking to exploit new business avenues in the export-oriented open economy preferentially employed Sri Lankans possessing a knowledge of English, who could communicate with, and function in, the fast integrating global economy. In short, the post-1978 economic changes underlined the utter centrality of English language for Sri Lanka's tiny, underdeveloped, export economy.

Still no attempt was made by Government to alter the Sinhala Only policy or to implement a programme of teaching aimed at achieving universal English literacy in the country. Consequently the vast majority of the second post-Bandaranaike generation, of the 1970s and early 1980s, also lacked a working knowledge of English. They too were educated into the non-English speaking underclass. And they were virtually excluded from access to the sought-after employment and career opportunities, and compelled to survive on the fringe, of the expanding open economy.

So the second post-Bandaranaike generation of Sinhalese (non-English speaking) youth went to the wall in the mid-1980s. The politically active strata of the marginalised and deprived majority of that generation regrouped under the JVP. They groped for an explanation for, and a way out, of their Sinhala Only ghetto. But they stumbled upon Jathika Chinthanaya, a supposedly enlightened national (read Sinhalese) ideology allegedly rooted in the consciousness of an idealised (Sinhalese) people supposedly unsullied by British colonial indoctrination. The assumed existence of a pristine Sinhalese population possessing an uncorrupted consciousness is, of course, a populist myth. It was employed to mask the fact that Jathika Chinthanaya is nothing more than gross Sinhalese chauvinism. Predictably the moribund Jathika Chinthanaya, rather than politically liberate that generation of Sinhalese, instead sucked them deeper into the same linguistic ghetto. They drank deep at the twin streams of anti-English linguistic nationalism and anti-Indian Sinhalese nationalism (since New Delhi had by then overtly intervened in the Sri Lankan Tamil Question). They sharpened their political teeth on two popular political platforms. The anti-kaduwa rhetoric carried an undercurrent of class-based antagonism to foreign capital and its national collaborative elements. The anti-Indian sentiments in effect expressed the hostility to Tamil Nadu, which has been synonymous with India in Sinhalese folk memory: thus many Sinhalese nationalists demanded the rapid withdrawal of the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) in order to prevent the Indian soldiers (Sikhs, Gurkas. etc) from forming sexual liaisons with Tamil women to spawn Tamil "Chola pattau [cubs]". These political elements combined to form, in the Sinhalese nationalist mind, an emotive but confused amalgam of anti-imperialism and anti-Indian (Tamil) expansionism. The mobilised rural Sinhalese flexed their political muscle and demonstrated their street power between 1985 and 1988, when they frequently brought commercial activities to a standstill in many parts of the country.

The regimes of Presidents JR Jayawardene and R Premadasa, struck back viciously between September 1988 and January 1990. Between them they eliminated a conservatively estimated sixty thousand to hundred thousand young men and women, almost the entire core of the politically and intellectually committed Sinhalese youth of the second post-Bandaranaike generation. Arguably most of them, had they lived, would have matured into the "community of principled men [and women]" which, said Mr Jayaweera, the country desperately needs.

The conditions facing the third post-Bandaranaike rural generation of Sinhalese youth (from mid-1980s through the 1990s) have hardly changed for the better. They too have been educated to take their place in society as the non-English speaking underclass, to be socially excluded and economically exploited. If recent news reports of the resurgence of the JVP are reliable, this generation too is preparing to go to the wall. It is unlikely that Mr Jayaweera will set eyes on the "community of principled men [and women]" he ardently seeks.



J.R. Jayawardena
Along with Premadasa eliminated
60,000 - 100 000

But, one may ask, what of the rest of the Sinhalese intelligentsia in each generation? Why did they fail to throw up men and women of the calibre sought by Mr Jayaweera? One (by no means the only) reason is the so-called "standardisation" of admission to university, introduced two-and-half decades ago (in 1972). It engineered preferential admission to the advantage of Sinhalese students and restricted the opportunities for higher education for Tamil students. In other words, "standardisation" is an expression of the rationale underlying Sinhala Only policy - that the Sinhalese (including those proficient in English) are entitled to preferential access to opportunities in education, employment, and so on. The excluded Tamil men and women formed the core of activists who established the militant groups in the mid-1970s and launched armed resistance. In effect, then, the Sri Lanka Government acted as the recruiting agent for the Tamil militant groups.

What was the impact of "standardisation" on the Sinhalese youth? In the academic field, "standardisation" turned out to be the proverbial double-edged sword. It no doubt enabled the entry of a considerably greater number of Sinhalese students into universities than would have otherwise been possible. But a majority of these students owe their academic success primarily to State intervention. Consequently the intellectual calibre of Sinhalese graduates in general is suspect not only in the eyes of the community of scholars but also crucially in the perception of the Sinhalese graduates themselves. So Mr Jayaweera is overgenerous in assuming that "competent engineers, doctors, academics, lawyers, teachers, administrators, we have in plenty."

The political impact of "standardisation" is devastating; it crippled the capacity of Sinhalese youth to engage in critical activism. Because, most Sinhalese graduates know that their academic achievement is not the result solely of their intellectual prowess. They are fully conscious that if not for the bureaucratically managed "standardisation" many of them would have failed to qualify for admission to any university in the country. Most importantly, they consequently are grateful to the State. Anti-State agitation does take place within universities. But that should not detract from the fundamental reality that generally speaking most university graduates of the past twenty five years and many of the faculty members are obliged to the State for their professional advancement.

Therefore the majority of Sinhalese intellectuals woefully lack the unshakeable self-confidence and unflinching self-image which are products of achieving success solely on one's own merit. It is futile to expect this psychologically emasculated intelligentsia, which includes most of those who were not eliminated in, but were intimidated by, the State repression in 1971 and 1988-90, to "stand up to our rampaging politicians" as Mr Jayaweera would wish.

A few Sinhalese intellectuals were refreshing exceptions to the rule. They courageously stood up to be counted but were starved of lateral political support by a Sinhalese intelligentsia largely subservient to the State. Some of the intellectuals were isolated and cornered into silence by the State; others emigrated to saner environs and most of their names adorn the numerous appeals made for an end to the war by Sri Lankans resident abroad.

Thus the tragedy Mr Jayaweera bemoans is entirely and deliberately self-inflicted.

The most insidious effect of "standardisation" is the debasing of inter-ethnic relations. Over the years, the practice of "standardisation" educated more than two generations of Sinhalese into believing that their social advancement necessarily depends on the social marginalisation, if not exclusion, of the Tamil community as a whole. A similar population of Tamils were in turn induced by "standardisation" to view the whole Sinhalese community as obstacles to upward social mobility. In other words, healthy competition between individual students was replaced by the debilitating confrontation between the ethnic groups. The rapidly deteriorating inter-ethnic relations were exploited by opportunistic politicians from both sides of the deepening ethnic divide for electoral gain. The lofty exercise in post-colonial "nation-building" therefore stood revealed as an unconscionable deception foisted upon the Tamil people.

Ranasinghe Premadasa

The cul-de-sac of Jathika Chinthanaya

The primary response of Sinhalese nationalism to this catastrophe was to produce its lunatic variant. The irrational reaction is illustrated by the article titled "The Tamil Problem" (Island, 24 August 1997) by Mr Gunadasa Amarasekera, an enthusiastic practitioner of Jathika Chinthanaya. The article is the text of the evidence he presented a week earlier to the Sinhala Commission, constituted to document and assess the rights Sinhalese people claim to have lost. He employed the almost three-decades old Centre-Periphery jargon in a desperate but wholly unsuccessful bid to attribute Tamil militancy to rural-to-urban surplus extraction by the "Tamil middle class" that migrated from the Jaffna peninsula to Colombo. Unable to admit to the lasting contribution of Sinhalese chauvinism to the radicalisation of Tamils and the growth of Tamil armed struggle, Mr Amarasekera blindly lashed out at "the Tamil political leadership...for making their youth the easy prey [sic] of Tamil fascist indoctrination from South India"!?

He succumbed to the Jathika Chinthanaya knee-jerk reaction when he claimed that Tamils in the north received a better English-medium education under colonial rule. This Goebellsian "big lie" has been the stock-in-trade of Sinhalese chauvinists who justify educational discrimination against Tamils in general as compensating action to remedy imbalances in the past, on the grounds that Tamil students had benefited disproportionately more from allegedly "superior" educational facilities set up in the Jaffna peninsula by American missionaries in the late 19th century. It is a "big lie" because at least one-third of the Tamil population in the peninsula, the so-called "low castes", were denied access to all avenues of education; and because the vast majority of Tamils - sixty percent of Ceylon Tamils and all Up-Country Tamils - live outside the peninsula. It is a "big lie" also because the British colonial administration concentrated in Colombo, the capital of then Ceylon, the most advanced infrastructure and facilities for education, trade, business and government for at least a century; Kandy, the "plantation capital", came second with respect to the concentration of resources and opportunities. The Royal-Thomian is the oldest cricket match in the country played annually for more than a century between the two most prestigious schools - Royal College and St Thomas College - both of which are situated in the south. It is very unlikely that a school from the Jaffna peninsula would be included in an objective list of the ten most prestigious schools in the country.

Indeed the dream of most Tamil parents in the north has always been to educate their children in the superior "Colombo Schools"; this was an important "pull factor" which induced Tamil migration to Colombo during this (20th) century. And young Tamil men educated in "Colombo schools" routinely commanded bigger dowries at marriage than their counterparts who were educated in Jaffna schools!

It follows that the so-called "over-achievement" of Tamil students in securing admission to universities has little to do with differences in the provision of educational facilities between schools in Jaffna and Colombo. The alleged existence of superior educational facilities in the Jaffna peninsula is nothing but an excuse manufactured to justify discrimination against Tamils in the country as a whole.

Mr Amarasekera also alluded to the "over-representation" of Tamils in public sector employment and service professions (medicine, law, etc.) to substantiate the alleged advantage, according to Sinhalese chauvinists, Tamil people are supposed to have enjoyed in the economy as a whole. But employment in the public sector and service professions, it must be noted, is the concern primarily of the middle class Tamils and Sinhalese. Significantly, at no point was any allegation made that Tamil are over-represented among the upper, property-owning class. The reason is simple. The Sri Lankan upper class, composed predominantly of land owning and business interests, is virtually monopolised by the Sinhalese as revealed, for example, by the data on estates and agency houses released by the Plantations Ministry when the estates were nationalised in 1972 and 1975.

The cynical manoeuvre by the Sinhalese propertied classes to redirect hostility of Sinhalese working classes towards the vulnerable Tamil population in the south is a further reason for emphasising Tamil "success" at the middle class level.

Moreover, Mr Amarasekera and fellow chauvinists imbued with Jathika Chinthanaya have also alleged that Tamils were privileged by the British colonial State as an integral part of the strategy of "divide and rule" in Ceylon. They glibly supported this assertion with illustrations from many other British colonies where the colonial State in each instance co-opted the minor ethnic groups and pitted them against the major ethnic group in order to neutralise any nationalist challenge to British colonial power.

Almost half the Tamil population in the NEP are condemned to live as refugees within Sri Lanka; and many hundreds of thousand Tamils have been driven to seek refuge in other countries. Human rights violations against Tamils are legion.

However, Ceylon was the prominent exception. The British proudly called it the "model colony" for good reason. The Sinhalese and Tamil elite collaborated utterly with the colonial State. Anti-colonial sentiments were expressed by the Jaffna Youth Congress in the north and the Lanka Sama Samaja Party (LSSP) in the south; but neither significantly threatened the colonial State. In fact the Tamil and Sinhalese elite never posed a credible nationalist challenge; they never attempted a freedom movement in the country. Independence was granted unexpectedly, and the ruling United National Party (UNP) did not have a national flag ready to be hoisted at independence. The elite were thoroughly confused by the gratuitous offer of "fully independent status" (left tantalisingly vague) made by Britain, with the British monarch continuing to hold office as the Head of State. So the UNP played safe and flew both the Union Jack and a temporary Lion Flag together at the farcical independence celebration on the 4th of February, 1948. Three years lapsed before the national flag was designed and adopted in 1951.

At no point was British colonialism compelled to rely on Tamils to keep the Sinhalese at bay. The supine Sinhalese elite simply gave no cause for the British to favour the Tamils. The much talked of "communal representation" in the legislative bodies under British rule had almost everything to do with rewarding the most accomplished Sinhalese and Tamil collaborators and virtually nothing to do with "divide and rule". In the "model colony" that was Ceylon, Britain ruled without dividing!

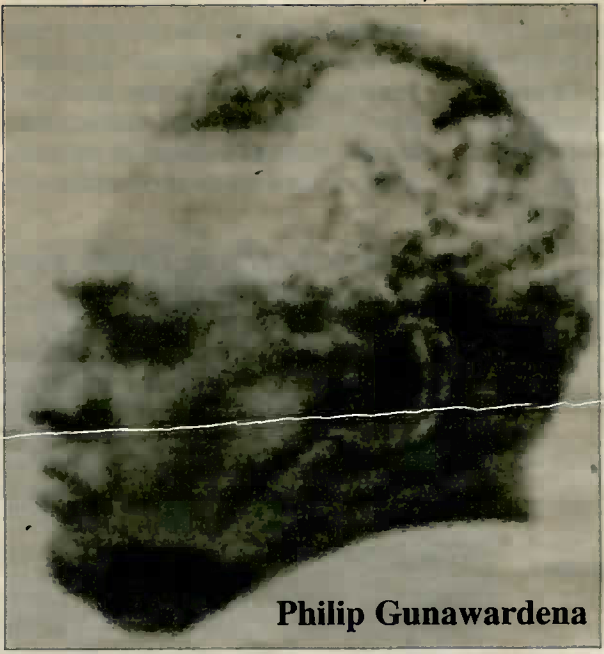
If the alleged historical advantage enjoyed by Tamils is largely a myth, repeating that groundless assertion today is positively obscene. The Tamil people in the North-East Province (NEP) have been victims of war for almost two decades, from the counter-insurgency campaign of "collective punishment" launched by Brigadier Weeratunga in July 1979 to the ongoing "war for peace" [sic] unleashed by President Chandrika Kumaratunga in September 1995. Tamil civilians have been decimated, property has been destroyed and many libraries and schools reduced to rubble with the evident intention to pauperise the Tamil people. Almost half the Tamil population in the NEP are condemned to live as refugees within Sri Lanka; and many hundreds of thousand Tamils have been driven to seek refuge in other countries. Human rights violations against Tamils are legion. Ceylon Tamils living outside the NEP were once widely distributed in the south. But successive anti-Tamil pogroms from 1956 to 1983 ensured ethnic cleansing; and the Ceylon Tamil populace is today essentially reduced to a stump in and around the city of Colombo. And those Tamils living in Colombo live in mortal fear of the "midnight knock" on the door; they are subject to indiscriminate arrest and detention - and some have "disappeared". Up-Country Tamils employed on plantations were held under slave labour conditions for more than one and half centuries. Yet Sinhalese chauvinists steeped in Jathika Chinthanaya repeatedly mouth the shibboleth, and Mr Amarasekera quoted it approvingly, that "Tamils are one of the most privileged minorities in the world".

Kaduwa re-visited

"English", Mr Amarasekera conceded, " has remained the `Open Sesame' to the wealth and privileges that could be acquired in the Ali Baba's cave of Colombo from the colonial to the contemporary period." And it has dawned on him, four decades too late, that "in a modernising trading economy that cannot be changed by the mere adoption of Sinhalese, Tamil and Arabic as official languages." But he could not climb out of the reactionary political rut of Jathika Chinthanaya; for he simultaneously condemned "English linguistic hegemony", as do other supporters of Janthika Chinthanaya, for the "cultural and economic deprivation among the Sinhala swabasha intelligentsia".

Mr Amarasekera made no such claim in respect of the Tamil swabasha intelligentsia. His omission is partly attributed to his grudging awareness of the contrasting tactics of the Sinhalese as opposed to the Tamil politicians. "SWRD Bandaranaike and Philip Gunewardene" he explained, "roused the exploited and deprived Sinhala vernacular constituency, with the promise to replace English with Sinhala as the official language, in order to emancipate the vernacular constituency from their economic and cultural enslavement in the chains of [sic] English linguistic hegemony. On the other hand the Tamil swabasha intelligentsia in the North and East never received the kind of leadership that the Sinhala swabasha intelligentsia received." But he avoided an examination of the reasons why the Tamil intelligentsia found it wise to behave differently.

The point Mr Amarasekera emphasised most was "the failure of the ruling Anglophile establishment to impart a knowledge of English to the swabasha educated intelligentsia. Swabasha education and Sinhala as the official language has been made the excuse[s] for the failure." It is refreshing to observe that an inkling of the enormity of the blunder perpetrated by the Sinhala Only policy is beginning to sink in. The belated and embryonic realisation of the importance of universal English literacy is also evident in the decision of the Department of Education to re-start the teaching of English language in government schools beginning with Grade One in January 1998.



Philip Gunawardena

However the road ahead is long and arduous. Building-up a cadre of effective teachers and ensuring universal English literacy is but the first small step. The elimination of "standardisation" and a reform of educational policy to give political expression to the ethnic diversity in the country would be the next and more important steps. They are preliminary tasks in an ambitious agenda which must seek to de-fang Jathika Chinthanaya and catalyse the emergence of "a community of principled men [and women]". Given the reactionary history of Sinhalese nationalism, the formulation of the agenda and its success are by no means guaranteed.

20 September 1997. ■

Dr Sachithanandam Sathananthan read for the Ph D degree at Wolfson College, University of Cambridge. He was Assistant Director at the Marga Institute, Colombo where he was a coordinator of research on South Asian regional cooperation conducted by the Committee on Studies for Cooperation in Development (CSCD) in South Asia. He is Founder-Chairman of Mandru (Institute for Alternative Development and Regional Cooperation) which he co-founded in 1989. His publications and research interests cover national movements, democratization and nation-building in Sri Lanka and South Asia. He is a documentary film-maker and is the Producer of two films on nationalism in South Asia. "Where Peacocks Dance" (1992) is a one hour long film on the cultural roots of Sindhi nationalism in Pakistan. "Suicide Warriors" (1996) is a half hour long film on the Tamil national struggle which explores specifically the role of women in the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in Sri Lanka. Both films were broadcast by Channel Four Television, London. "Of Mice, Mothers and Saints" (1994) is a one hour long film produced by him for ZDF, German Television, which takes a social anthropological journey into the lives of childless women who seek divine intervention to attain motherhood at the shrine of the 16th century Sufi Saint, Shah Dauley Shah, in the Pakistan Punjab.

Dr Sathananthan is the Founder-Secretary of the Action Group of Tamils in Colombo (AGOTIC).

Life in the Northeast - September Diary

Killed in temple promises

Sinhala troops hiding inside the Suthumalai Amman temple in occupied Jaffna have killed two Tamil civilians on the temple's premises. Mahalingam Uthayakumar (24) and A. Ramesh of Suthumalai and Tellipallai respectively were the victims. The incident has caused agitation among the peninsula's Hindu community who are outraged that innocent blood has been spilt on holy grounds.

Housing colony in Vanni

The Additional. GA for Kilinochchi Mr. Rasanayagam opened the Thumpuru housing colony managed by the Hindu youth society, on 25th of August at 3pm. The national flag of Tamil Eelam was raised in the presence of the TRO chief Mr. A. Rasadurai. The head of the elementary school for the colony cut the tape. Mr. Thangarasa, president of the youth society presided over the public meeting that was held after the opening ceremony.

Open-air plays in the Vanni

The Vanni "Kalai Thai Manram" is held a week-long music and drama festival with many open-air plays depicting the lives and struggles of the Tamil people, particularly in the face of the present threat from Sinhalese armed forces. The plays reflect contemporary life and dramatise the living reality of the Tamil nation in the throes of a brutal army invasion in which immeasurable atrocities are being enacted against them. The most popular plays are "We Rise Again", "Light After Darkness" and "The Seeds of Freedom", which were performed in the open-air and attracted huge audiences.

Sexual attacks on children

The Jaffna public is becoming increasingly worried about the frequent sexual abuse of young girls by occupying Sinhalese soldiers, especially at Atchuvely checkpoints. Molestation of school girls at army checkpoints is routine, students say, but there have also been a number of violent sexual attacks on very young girls on their way to or from school. A girl named Palanthi was gang-raped and beaten at a checkpoint in Atchuvely by Sri Lankan soldiers who abducted her on her way to school. She is six years old. A few months before that a twelve-year old girl was raped in the same area. Just over six months ago, another pre-pubescent girl of Puttur Sri Somaskanda college was raped by Sinhalese soldiers but when her school principal complained to the nearby army camp, the principal was threatened to remain silent. The sexual perversion of many of the Sinhala troops in Jaffna combined with their contempt towards Tamils makes Jaffna a dangerous place for Tamil females living under military occupation.

Cruelty at the checkpoints

In Trincomalee, Valaichchenai and Batticaloa - in the island's east - the government's Sinhalese troops fast losing their grip on these towns have intensified their cruelty towards Tamil civilians passing across army checkpoints. Bullying is rife and women in particular say they are scared to venture past checkpoints for fear of sexual harassment and Tamil children have reported that they are verbally abused by troops in foulest language.

Army checkpoints keep moving

The frequent change-around of army checkpoints in Jaffna is causing tremendous inconvenience to the Tamil population, especially in the face of the 6pm to 6am curfew, which shows no signs of being lifted. The people are suffering in silence, fearful of making any complaints to the hostile and increasingly vicious Sinhalese military authorities. The Jaffna Vembady junction checkpoints have been recently shifted to the telecom junction and also to the front of the Vembady girls' school, which has caused much anxiety among the female students here, many of whom have already been subjected to sexual abuse from the Sinhala troops . The girls are being stopped and checked by male soldiers. There is little, however, that they or their teachers can do to prevent these molestations. Meanwhile, the Stanley Road petroleum checkpoint which closed a month ago has been reopened.

Anti-polio drive a success

The UNICEF representative has declared that the anti-polio campaign was successfully implemented in the LTTE-administered areas of Mannar, Vavuniya and Kilinochchi. The LTTE has given its full co-operation to the programme and no untoward incidents occurred on the relevant dates.

Vanni village to be developed

The women's section of the LTTE, the TEEDOR and the Tamil Villages Development Society got together to draw up plans for a full-scale development of the under-developed village of Jeevanagar (Vanni). The inhabitants of this village have been undergoing

Life in the Northeast - September Diary

much hardship since most here are displaced men, women and children living below the poverty line and subject to repeated illnesses due to the government's medical embargo. The joint development efforts of the LTTE, TEEDOR and TVDS are expected to vastly improve the quality of life of the people living here.

Tamil murder gangs in East

Sinhalese armed forces occupying the Tamil north/east are employing Tamil gangs to carry out murders of innocent people and to act as informants for the army. The presence of such gangs was confirmed in a letter by a Muslim government minister to the president recently in which he said a Tamil gang employed by the army was responsible for burning 47 fishing boats belonging to Muslims in Kaththankudy (Batticaloa). One of the main murder gangs operating in this district is called the Razik Group. In Vavuniya, the main terror-gang carrying out similar functions calls itself the Mohan Group. All are vicious killers who murder for money. Financially, they are closely involved with the Sinhala military, being paid to carry out murders for the army and also expected to give the military a share of their other earnings.

Priest knifed to death

Sinhalese armed forces have sliced to death a Christian priest who was gathering roofing leaves in Murippu (Kilinochchi). The parish priest - Arudpalan (42) - formerly from Karainagar (Jaffna) was attacked by soldiers wielding knives. He had been missing since the 25th of August but his mutilated body was later discovered. Documents of his identity were found by his side. Arudpalan was a priest of the Church of South India which is conducting yeoman service to the displaced persons of Vanni, irrespective of religious affiliations.

Army sells opium to Tamils

Sinhalese armed forces are working hard to create a narcotics-dependency among the traditionally conservative Jaffna population by supplying them hard drugs. Opium, ganga and other narcotics are being distributed by soldiers to the despondent Jaffna people in large quantities. The aim is clearly to wreck the traditionally stable social fabric of the Tamil people, impair people's health and instil a state of dependency on the armed forces. Liquor shops have also been dotted all over the peninsula, even near temples and schools, with the full encouragement and blessings of the Sinhala military. Some senior military officers have even opened bars in partnership with a minority of unscrupulous Tamil shopkeepers. The military can be seen making every effort to encourage the manufacture and sale of illicit brews. Dangerous illegal liquors like Kasippu are now marketed with vigour by the army. A team of Tamil social workers from Koddady (a suburb of Jaffna), who brought to the notice of the Jaffna military commander the existence of a Hooch Den in the city, were given a sound beating by soldiers.

Ayurvedic centre opened

The LTTE administration in conjunction with TRO declared open a new Ayurvedic treatment centre in Mullaitivu. TRO's Mr. Ravi ceremonially opened the centre. The opening ceremony is being followed by an exhibition of the uses of Ayurvedic treatment being held in the Sri Subramania Vidyalam Puthukudiyiruppu building. Mr Saravanapavan, the deputy director of education, declared the exhibition open.

Increase in epidemics

Hospitals in occupied Jaffna are in appalling conditions, with a serious shortage of staff and medicines. No attempts have yet been made by the government to repair buildings which its forces bombed during the conquest of Jaffna. Malnutrition is rife and child deaths are commonplace in paediatric wards. Premature deliveries are also a major problem, as are illnesses connected with the respiratory tract.

TRO active in Vanni areas

TRO's Accelerated Development Programme is helping the students of Vanni, as well as adults and young children. They have opened 16 education service centres all over Kilinochchi, Mullaitivu, Mannar and Vavuniya. These centres will help with the restoration of school buildings as well as the supply of school equipment and stationary. The Sri Lankan government presently tries to disrupt all development efforts by Tamils in Vanni. Meanwhile, TRO is also managing old people's homes, for those who have lost contact with their families due to displacements caused by the Sinhalese military.

Headless body near army camp

The headless body of a Tamil man arrested earlier by the Sinhala military during a routine round-up was found 200 yards from the Siththandy army

Life in the Northeast - September Diary

camp. S. Chinnadurai was twenty-six years old with two children. He was a resident of Siththandy (Batticaloa).

Fishermen face starvation

Due to Sinhala military assaults, most of Trincomalee's Tamil fishermen - who made up one third of the area - are now in refugee camps both here and in South India. More than 2000 Trincomalee fishermen are in Tamil Nadu. The ones in Sri Lankan detention camps are subject to severe restrictions and to government regulations which ban them from engaging in fishing. The Sri Lankan government has meanwhile brought in Sinhalese fishermen to take over the land that the Tamil fishermen used to live on. These Sinhalese colonists enjoy the patronage and protection of the Sinhalese army and navy. All forms of relief to the Tamil fisherman have now been stopped by the Chandrika government, which has also halted humanitarian aid supplied by NGOs. The fishermen face starvation as a result.

Pooneryn school reopened

The Pooneryn Maha Vidyalam (school) had remained closed during the period when the town was under Sinhalese occupation. But since the army withdrew, it has been possible to reopen the school. On September 12, the school was once again reopened to the area's Tamil students. Kilinochchi's director of education, P. Ariaratnam ceremonially declared the school open and P. Thangarasa, chairman of the Pooneryn development society lit the traditional oil lamp. Students, members of the public and educationalists were also present.

More Tamils disappear

The island's eastern Amparai district has experienced a further rise in the number of disappearances of Tamil civilians at the hands of the occupying Sinhalese military. Victims of torture and death in custody are also mounting, causing concern to human rights groups. Of particular note are headless corpses of Tamils which are showing up frequently on roadsides. These bodies belong to people who were arrested by the Sinhalese military of Central Camp. Meanwhile, two bodies of Tamil youth were fished out of a disused well. Hundreds of Tamil families here are starting to move out of the area to escape the army's increasing brutality.

Buddhist enclave for Jaffna

Venerable Dhammaloka Gnanaseeha Thero (high priest) has told a gathering of educationalists, officials and politicians that the grounds of the newly-built Buddhist temple at Aryakulam junction in Jaffna town should be expanded. He added that the larger area should be designated a holy Buddhist reservation and that Sinhalese Buddhists should be exclusively settled there. The colonists should then be guarded by a permanent Sinhalese army camp, he suggested. The government is reported to be seriously considering the proposal.

Forest wealth is robbed

The forest wealth of Kaddaiparichan (Trincomalee district) is steadily being eroded by the Sinhala military. Valuable trees are being cut down ostensibly for "security reasons", but the timber is actually being sold by Sri Lankan army officers for profit. This is a racket being performed with impunity by senior members of the police and army. Moreover, Tamil civilians are being forced into free labour as woodcutters in this sinister activity. Tamils who newly enter army-controlled areas are also being exploited into such practices. Their identity papers are taken from them and they are kept in detention until their assigned tasks are completed. The Tamils of Sampur, Kunitheevu, Paddalipuram, Ilakanthai and Kaddaiparichan are facing the worst of this army exploitation.

Symbolic fast at Nallur

The Women's Union of Jaffna - formed to trace the whereabouts of 750 Tamil civilians who disappeared after military arrest - have expressed grief and dismay that the Sri Lankan government does not intend carrying out legal proceedings against military offenders. The women's union also points out that the government's so-called "human rights task force" never materialised, and neither are there any signs of the promised "human rights commission". Jaffna is therefore left without any means to check human rights violations committed by the government's Sinhalese security forces, which continue to be on the increase. When the women's union asked for a personal meeting with the Sinhalese president she point-blank refused. Meanwhile Jaffna's martial law administrator stepped up his threats against Tamil civilians, saying they would be "severely dealt with". In desperation, the women's union held a fast in the Nallur Kandasamy temple premises on 19th September. Over 500 women participated in this symbolic gesture. Ironically, the

Life in the Northeast - September Diary

venue was the same place LTTE martyr Lt. Col. Thileepan died when he fasted unto death exactly ten years ago against the atrocities committed by the IPKF against the Tamil people.

30,000 people are homeless

Since 1990, Valigamam north from Telippalai to Kankesanthurai has been made out of bounds to the indigenous Tamil people by the Sinhala army. Likewise, Palali, Maviddapuram, Keerimalai, Myliddy and Mallakam are not open to their former inhabitants. Similarly in Jaffna town the coastal belt from Columbuthurai to Navanthurai - inclusive of Passaiyoor and Gurunagar - are occupied only by Sinhalese soldiers. This has left more than 30,000 displaced Tamil people homeless, putting up wherever they can.

Jaffna library: nothing done

There has been no progress at all on the president's much-hyped "restoration of Jaffna library", but instead the government is managing quite effectively to construct Buddhist edifices all over the army occupied peninsula. The rate at which these edifices are being installed is remarkable, showing that if the government had real intentions of restoring the Jaffna library it would have made at least some progress by now. But it is evident that the government's intentions in the occupied peninsula are more sinister. While showing mock concern about the library-using cheap propaganda tricks like asking the Sinhalese people to donate "a book and a brick"-the government is using this as a cover to step up its programme of Sinhalese-Buddhist expansionism. The Jaffna public library was one of the finest in Asia. It was burnt to the ground by Sinhalese armed forces under the personal instructions of two Sinhalese cabinet ministers in Jawawardene's 1981 regime.

Statue too beheaded

The statue of the last Jaffna king (1519-1560) installed near his seat of power in Nallur was destroyed by the occupying Sinhalese forces during the conquest of Jaffna (1995). The statue now has its head hanging on its chest. All attempts by the public to repair the statue has been obstructed by the Sinhalese military. The disfigured statue is now an eyesore and a source of shame for the Tamil people.

Temple under army rule

The Thondamanaru Murugan Temple-which in the past attracted saintly figures and acolytes like "German Swami" from Germany and Gowribala (son of Lord Soulbury, Ceylon's last governor) — is now under Sinhalese military rule. Tamil pilgrims who went recently to visit this historic temple for its annual festival were all harassed and body-checked by troops. All gifts for Lord Murugan were examined and some confiscated. Some years back the Sinhalese military deliberately set fire to the huge wooden chariot used to carry the Lord around the temple's perimeter during festivals.

38 NGO's are ordered out

No less than 38 NGOs serving in army-controlled Tamil parts of Batticaloa district have been ordered by the Chandrika government to cease all humanitarian operations. This immediately follows a government order banning NGOs from assisting people in LTTE administered areas of Batticaloa. The only two agencies now allowed to function in LTTE held parts are the ICRC and the French medical team, MSF. But even these have been strictly ordered not to undertake any activities other than health services. This winding up of NGO activities by Colombo signals a shift towards an even harsher policy against the Tamil civilian population. The measures have alarmed independent observers who are aware that the food distribution network and medical facilities for Batticaloa are already inadequate to cater to the needs of the displaced. ■

Operation "Jeya Sikiru" : A military dead - end ?

Unlike the Jaffna theatre of operations, which consisted of buildings and little winding roads, the Vanni theatre is an exposed stretch of land. Instead of being limited to a few paths, the layout of the Vanni terrain makes it possible to use any route one chooses. This is a peculiarity of the region which holds advantages and disadvantages for conventional warfare.

The Sinhala generals calculated that conventional warfare on a scale such as that used in the capture of Jaffna would be more than capable of taking the Jaffna-Kilinochchi road.

The generals anticipated that with tanks leading the attack, firing at either side of the road, and artillery pieces raining shells and with mortars joining in, the LTTE units and their bases would be destroyed. The Sinhala troops could then wrap up the battle by storming the devastated Tiger positions. Hence 'Jaya Sikiru' would be a victory, just as the battle for Jaffna was.

Almost exactly a year before, the Sri Lankans conducted operation 'Sath Jaya'. This was actually the first attempt to capture the Vavuniya-Elephant Pass road. Although it was a hasty move, intended to offset the debacle at Mullaitivu, this operation did not continue due to several prevailing military conditions.

Using the Elephant Pass base as the launch point for operation 'Sath Jaya' presented the Sinhala military with severe logistical and casualty-evacuation problems. It was only with immense difficulty that the Sinhala military commanders could move their wounded soldiers to the south and bring up further reinforcements from there. The Sinhala navy and air force are not in a position to provide continuous logistical support even today.

How the LTTE official publication Viduthalai Puligal" sees it

Therefore the Sinhala military chose Vavuniya as their launch point, and operation 'Jaya Sikiru' commenced from there. The on-going operation can be viewed in three phases.

The first phase was to capture Nedunkerni and Omanthai. The second phase was to move from Omanthai and capture Rambaikulam before going on to Vilakkuvaithakulam. The third phase was to move from Vilakkuvaithakulam to capture Panrikaithkulam before going on to Puliyankulam via Panikaneeravi.

During these phases, the Tigers also launched two massive attacks on positions occupied by 'Jaya Sikiru'. These five actions are described below.

First Phase

The forces deployed for 'Jaya Sikiru' used the ordinary conventional warfare tactics in their first action. This move focused on raining artillery fire on LTTE positions from a safe distance away, (outside the reach of LTTE small arms) and then sending in ground troops with armour to secure the area. Whenever it was possible, they tried to move stealthily towards targets that were being soften up by artillery fire.

On 13 May 1997, 'Jaya Sikiru' commenced on two flanks. The Sinhala forces on one flank headed towards Omanthai via Nochchimodai and those on the other flank headed for Nedunkerni from the Dollar and Kent farm (at Manal Aru). The first day consisted almost entirely of shelling. The battle intensified on the second and third days.

On 16 May 1997, two Sri Lankan battle tanks were destroyed by LTTE units. The battle wore on as the Sinhala forces struggled unsuccessfully to capture Omanthai. The Sri Lankan government for its part announced the capture of Omanthai even though its forces had failed to do so.

The Sri Lankan government had hoped to wrap up this phase of the operation in 2 or 3 days and proclaim a victory to the Sinhala people. In actuality, this phase took two weeks.

In the two weeks of fighting that it took to capture and consolidate Omanthai and Nedunkerni, 125 Sinhala soldiers were killed and over 500 wounded. A total of 4 battle tanks were destroyed and another two were withdrawn from the battlefield as they were too badly damaged. A Sinhala Brigadier admitted "the troops have faced fierce resistance from the Tigers".

The Tigers' artillery fire was a key factor in altering the course of this battle. For the first time, the Sinhala military had to advance under incessant shelling. The proportion of the wounded amongst their casualties rose significantly. Each day, the Sinhala military commanders were forced to shift hundreds of wounded troops out of the battle zones. This was the main reason for 'Jaya Sikiru's slow pace.

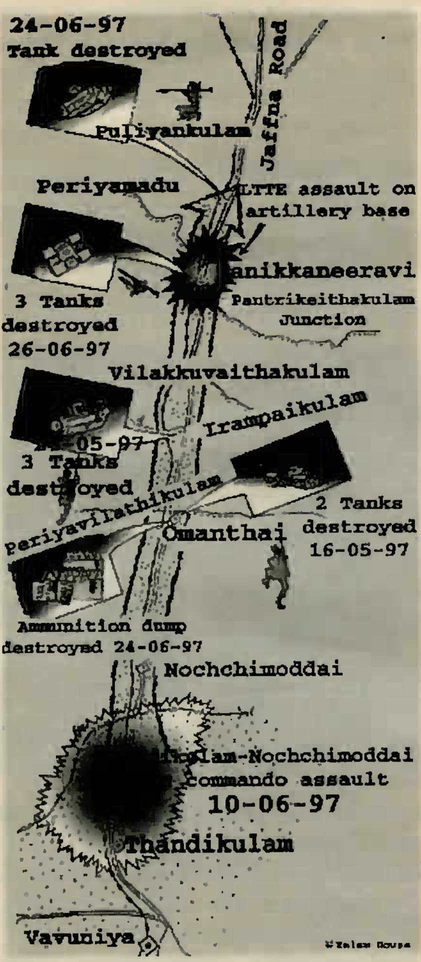
Second Phase

The Tigers faced 'Jaya Sikiru' in a different manner compared to previous defences they had staged. The artillery and mortars captured during the attacks on Mullaitivu and Pulugunavi army camps gave LTTE limited conventional warfare capabilities. So the fighting in 'Jaya Sikiru' developed in an unexpected way.

On 24 May 1997, in the second phase of the battle, the fighting to annex Irambaikulam, intensified. On that day, 2 battle tanks and an APC (armoured personnel carrier) were destroyed. More than 25 Sinhala troops were killed.

The Tiger artillery pieces and anti-armour weapons severely damaged 'Jaya Sikiru' military capability. The loss of troops and tanks blunted the *Sinhala troops' advance and the oper*ation ground to a halt for a few days. For ten days, there was no attempt to annex any further sections of the road, and only artillery fire was used.

On 3 June 1997, the Sinhala troops once again moved out from the Omanthai front. Over the next few days, they managed to move close to the junction of Vilakuvaithakulam, near Omanthai. On the 6 June 1997, they made a sudden lunge for Panikaineravi, and ran into stiff resistance from the Tigers. Twenty Sinhala soldiers were killed and 40 severely wounded.



The Sinhala government made much propaganda out of the annexation of the Periyamadu area. The Sri Lankan Deputy Defence Minister A Ratwatte, reiterated their intention to link Vavuniya and Kilinochchi.

The military high command vowed to capture Puliyankulam next. It was anxious to wrap up this stage of their operation and to celebrate a much-needed victory. This was because enthusiasm for 'Jaya Sikiru' was waning amongst the Sinhala public, unlike before the start of the operation. The Sinhala government was desperate to revive this enthusiasm.

The Nochchimoddai - Thandikulam assault

While the Sinhala high command was planning the attack to annex Puliyankulum, it received a severe jolt at Thandikulum. LTTE units penetrated into the (occupied) Nochchimoddai area and staged a commando attack.

The Sinhala forces had anticipated an LTTE counter-attack, but were expecting it to come from Omanthai or from further north. Therefore the LTTE attack in the vicinity of Vavuniya came as quite a shock. Thandikulum was the nerve centre of the Sinhala operation. The 'Jaya Sikiru' operational HQ itself was located here. Military hardware and medical supplies were also stockpiled here.

The Tigers suddenly stormed Thandikulum from both sides of the road that goes through it. The fuel for the 'Jaya Sikiru' war machine was kept here: artillery shells, mortar rounds and ammunition for the battle tanks. The Tigers stopped the 'Jaya Sikiru' war machine by simply starving it of fuel. Thousands of artillery shells and hundreds of tank rounds were blown up during the attack.

Several military vehicles were also destroyed and a few were captured. During the attack, 400 Sinhala troops were killed and over 570 wounded.

Special Forces commandos were airlifted in to assist the encircled Sinhala units, and an Mi-24 helicopter gunship was badly damaged when the airborne troops were beaten off. Sinhala troops trying to reach Nocchimodai by moving south from Omanthai were also attacked and 2 battle tanks destroyed.

The Thandikulam-Nochchimodai area remained under LTTE control for at least 24 hours. Thandikulum was the location of the first major setback for the 'Jaya Sikiru' troops.

In the midst of Sri Lankan propaganda that "the Tigers are on the run in the jungle" being put about at the time, news reports said that the handful of Sinhala troops who escaped from Thandikulum shed their uniforms and mingled with civilians as they fled south to Vavuniya.

85 LTTE fighters, including 3 Black Tigers lost their lives in this major assault.

Third Phase

The attack on Thandikulum froze the 'Jaya Sikiru' troops in their positions for two weeks. The Sinhala forces used these two weeks to replenish their destroyed arsenal, replace the troops who had been killed and wounded and consolidate their defences in the places they had occupied.

The Sinhala military was anxious to annex Puliyankulam soon and thereby cool off the effect of the debacle at Thandikulum. Puliyankulam is only a few miles from the Sinhala forces' positions and their commanders expected to capture it in a few days.

The third phase of the battle was initiated in such a climate. On 22 June 1997, the Sinhala forces attempted to advance from Panikaneravi and ran into resistance from the LTTE's women's units. The female fighters destroyed one battle tank and severely damaged two more, killing 15 Sinhala soldiers.

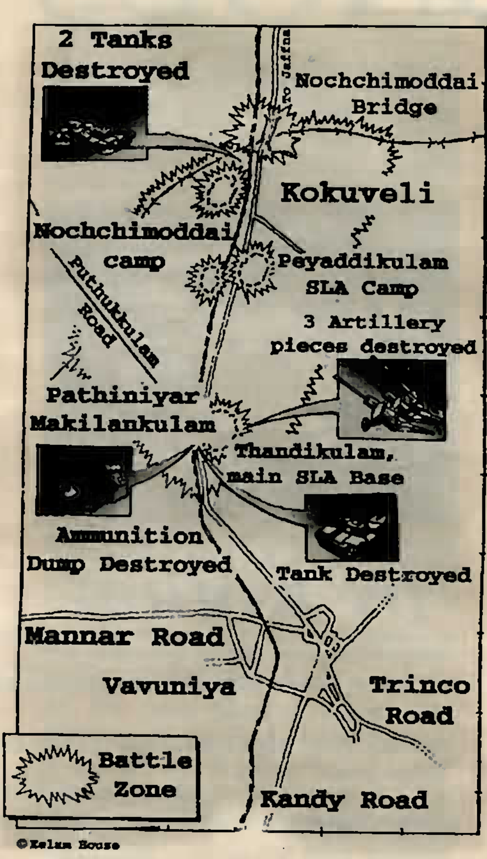
The third phase of the battle lasted only two days before the Tigers staged another major attack.

The Pantrikeithakulam - Panikaneravi assault

Fourteen days after the attack on Thandikulam, the Tigers struck with equal force on the front flank of the 'Jaya Sikiru' troops. The Sinhala military's artillery division was the primary target of this attack. In the fighting which lasted all night, the Tigers captured a 120mm artillery piece and the gun carriages of 4 others, as well as several hundred shells.

185 Sinhala soldiers were killed and over 200 wounded. The LTTE lost 90 fighters.

This attack was an embarrassment for the Sinhala government which had made much propaganda about 'Jaya Sikiru', but which was actually suffering several reversals on the battle field. The operation was also proceeding exceedingly slowly.



©Eelam House

'Jaya Sikiru' had lost lots of men and equipment, but had hardly annexed an eighth of the road. Experienced troops had been specially brought up for 'Jaya Sikiru' and these severe losses of front-line troops is destroying the Sinhala military like a cancer from within.

Spectacular victories are the preserve of those who take risks boldly. History would not have bestowed the title 'Great' on Alexander if he had hesitated or retreated and not ventured into the Arabian sands or the mountains of Afghanistan.

The plans devised by the Israeli commanders to fly thousands of miles to Entebbe airport and rescue their citizens held hostage read like the script of a movie. However, the Israelis pulled off the operation successfully. On the other hand, if Idi Amin's timid soldiers had attacked Israel, they would have been utterly destroyed.

Spectacular military successes depend on who is attempting to achieve them and against whom. So is the Sinhala military's attempt to split the Vanni region down the middle a daydream?

If both sides had an equal chance to build up their conventional strength, then 'Jaya Sikiru' would surely be a 65-mile dream. However, as the Sinhala forces have the facilities of a state, they think they can successfully conduct such an operation.

Thandikulum-Nochchimoddai: The Tigers' deployments

'Jaya Sikiru' faces two kinds of challenges from the LTTE. The first is the resistance to Sinhala troop movements and the other is the sudden massive attack launched against stationary Sinhala units. The determined LTTE resistance to their movements has become a significant problem for the Sinhala troops. At the same time, the Sinhala government did not expect the severe losses dealt to it during attacks on its stationary units.

The Sinhala troops are being attacked in unexpected locations and at unexpected times. The Thandikulum assault came from an unexpected quarter and the Panikaneravi-Pantrikeithakulam assualt came at an unexpected hour. Keeping the Sinhala forces off balance with sudden attacks is Mr. V. Pirabakaran's (LTTE leader) strategy.

The loss in men and material for the Sinhala units over the last 60 days is significant. Likewise, the 'Jaya Sikiru' forces can expect further losses and destruction in the future. ■

PEACE OF THE POISONOUS KIND

Giving away land rights at the point of a gun is nothing new in the history of conquest. Native Americans hundreds of years ago, unaware of the future significance of the pieces of paper, signed 'treaties' with the invaders of their land.

The results were catastrophic, they were butchered, they were raped and they were tortured. Those who remained alive were driven away and their homes were burnt. They were eventually forced to give up their independence and their means of subsistence. And because of the signed pieces of paper it was all done 'legally'.

Chandrika Kumaratunga, like every Sri Lankan head of government before her, has exactly the same attitude to 'peace agreements', the modern day terminology for treaties. Nothing fundamental has changed, just the gloss on the propaganda is more thickly spread.

The Sri Lankan government makes plans to negotiate peace only at times when it thinks it is able to put a gun at the heads of Tamil people to attempt to force our leaders to sign away our rights to our own homeland and our rights to decide our political future.

The brutal military invasion and occupation of Jaffna means that the government holds thousands of Tamils captive in the city. In addition there are thousands more incarcerated in concentration camps in Vavuniya and in the East. Every day there is murder, rape, sexual assault, torture and disappearances.

On the Tamils who managed to escape Jaffna when the army invaded in October 1995, taking refuge in the jungles of the Vanni, the Sri Lankan Government blasts bombs and shells and places an embargo on essentials, on food and on medicine, in an attempt to terrify and starve them out.

by Kothai

When it has achieved all it can, and before its hold slips, the Sri Lankan Government will begin to talk about peace, while it has the fate of thousands of Tamil people's lives with which to bargain. As it has done in the past, it will aim to use a state of terror to try and force maximum submission from our people.

Peace is a much used and abused word. For the pure at heart it means freedom from persecution and exploitation, and justice in equality. But for those with minds full of poison it can mean the imposition of authoritarianism and silent acceptance of atrocity. The stakes are high in both places. On one side lies the possibility of true freedom, an end to decades of brutal persecution. On the other the ability to kill, rape and maim, to exploit, loot and burn with impunity, having disarmed the resistance.

In a polished performance while presiding orer murders, Chandrika, also plays the role of the peace Queen. Though more skilled than her predecessors in the art of hypocrisy, the development of her talents to charm her people cost them more than $25 million, paid to a US firm in public relations fees a few months ago. Yet still her popularity fails her. Sinhala Buddhist fundamentalism's insatiable desire to conquer and destroy is exhausting its own people. More than 10,000 soldiers have run away from the Sri Lankan army, despite the heavy punishment in store for deserters.

Contentious peace has given birth to monstrous worldwide organisations, churning out hi-design propaganda to get public support to prop up the likes of Chandrika in every country. A veritable industry of poisonous saints has surged up, where billions of dollars are spent daily to invest in a guaranteed future of dependency for those with a quest for political power. The peace industry produces seminars, brochures, consultants and reports to win the people's hearts and minds. It employs fieldworkers and conducts experiments to brainwash and control. Its professionals make high profile visits from country to country, creating reports that conveniently shift the political agenda.

Meanwhile stricken with guilt for the atrocities of their ancestors, people of the Western world fall for the temptations of the peace industry to right their wrongs. They pour money and energy towards its quest, little knowing that they perpetuate more viciously than before the false peace that attempts to numb every corner of the globe into submission.

Human Rights violations in the Batticaloa district

By Joseph Pararajasingham

(Member of Parliament & Leader of the TULF Parliamentary Group)

I entered Parliament in the year 1990 - the year when human rights violations by the Sri Lankan security forces reached a massive scale, with several large scale massacres of Tamil civilians. I was re-elected to Parliament in the August, 1994 General Elections, obtaining 43,900 preference votes the highest ever obtained by any Tamil politician in the North East since Independence. I am now the Parliamentary Group Leader of the TULF, which consists of five members out of the 17 Tamil members representing various other political parties - particularly militant groups, which work along with the Sri Lankan security forces.

As an elected representative, I am physically present in my constituency for more than eight months a year. Therefore, I am well informed about human rights violations in my district. It is my desire to outline briefly the unprecedented level of human rights violations that have taken place in my district, committed by the Sri Lankan security forces, the Muslim Homeguards (an armed group established by the Government to safeguard the Muslim villages) and a few Tamil militant groups, armed and financed by the Sri Lankan security forces. These include mass scale massacres of innocent civilians, rape, torture, detention, disappearances while in the custody of security forces, shelling and bombing of civilian Tamil areas and denial of food and medicines to tens of thousands of displaced Tamils in "uncleared" areas.

This note covers only a few instances of the violations by security forces since the purpose of the note is to give the essence of the situation. All the instances mentioned above were brought to the attention of the Parliament, the President and the Deputy Defence Minister and in most cases to foreign embassies including the Embassy of the United States in Colombo. They cannot plead ignorance.

All of the above violations reflect the intensification and escalation of the conflict in the North East. However, there has been no justification for widespread human rights violations. It is to be noted here that not one of the perpetrators has been found guilty and punished for even the severest crimes. The primary reason for this is that the Emergency Regulations and the Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA) has given wide arbitrary powers to the security forces which results in the impunity enjoyed by them by usage of these obnoxious regulations, including through murder, torture and intimidation of witnesses. Also, the Government seems unable or unwilling to punish the perpetrators. Directives and statements by Government leaders, including the President, are not implemented by the military in the field. Since they are not punished, more violations are committed.

The military is also encouraged by the regular denials by the Government of the violations, ignoring results of independent inquiries, the government censorship and restrictions on outside observers and NGOs, and by the support that the Government and the military receives from the international community. Of special significance is the U. S. support in arms sales and Green Beret training to the Sri Lankan Army.

1990-1993 Massacres With Impunity and Denial

- On June 11,1990, the six months truce between the government and the LTTE (Tamil Tigers) broke off, and the Sri Lankan Army commenced an offensive Operation on June 23,1990 to take control of my constituency - the Batticaloa District. From the date of commencement of the operation until July 15,1990 more than 600 innocent Tamil civilians were massacred by the Sri Lankan Army, which included about 50 burned in tires with the charred bodies lying in the highways and prominent places of the Batticaloa municipal limits for public exposure. This barbaric and inhuman exhibition of burned bodies of innocent Tamils in tires was to create a fear phobia and warning to the Tamil civilian population that anybody having links with the LTTE would ultimately embrace the same fate. This was the same tactic used in 1989 and 1990 in the campaign against the JVP in South Sri Lanka, and clearly had the approval of the Sri Lankan Government.

● **On August 11,1990 the Sri Lankan security forces rounded up a refugee camp in the Sittandy Hindu Temple, which housed almost 2000 Tamil refugees and took into custody 32 innocent civilians - whose whereabouts are unknown to date. They are presumed killed while in the custody of the army.**

● **On August 20,1990 the Muslim Homeguards entered a Tamil village, Savukady, in my constituency, and massacred 32 innocent civilians who included women and children.**

● On September 5,1990 the Sri Lankan Army took into custody 148 Tamil youths from the Eastern University Refugee Camp, Vantharamoolai, Batticaloa in the presence of many hundreds of witnesses. This refugee camp was the largest refugee camp in the district at that time, housing over 40,000 refugees. 148 Tamil youths were later killed by the army while in their custody. I personally visited the refugee camp on September 9,1990 and obtained a list prepared by the university authorities giving the names of the youths apprehended by the army from the camp. I took up this incident of a large scale massacre by the army on the floor of the Parliament and submitted the list containing the names of the youths. The Deputy Minister of Defence, late General Ranjan Wijeratne, totally denied on the floor of the house that, on inquiries made by him, anyone was arrested from the refugee camp. Two months later the Secretary to the Ministry of Defence wrote me a letter informing me that there was a cordon and search operations by the army on that date (September 5, 1990) and the army took into custody 31 youths, and they were all released within 24 hours. I subsequently raised a supplementary question in Parliament that all these 31 persons about whom the Defence Secretary stated in his letter were released within 24 hours had not reached their homes. The reply was humiliating in saying, "The LTTE has taken them."

Subsequently, it became well known that the army had massacred these 148 youths. The Human Rights Task Force (HRTF), a body appointed by the Government in the month of August, 1991, in its annual report in December, 1993, accused the army of the killing of the 148 Tamil youths and named four army officers who were responsible for the killings. Up to now no action was taken by the previous government as well as the present government against the four army officers who are accused as the perpetrators of these brutal killings.

Bolgoda Lake Killings in Colombo

Of the four army officers mentioned by the HRTF, one of them was subsequently named as the first accused in the Bolgoda Lake killings in the city of Colombo in mid- 1995, where bodies of 27 Tamil youths killed by the army in the headquarters ofthe Special Task Force were found floating in various lakes within the city of Colombo. It is interesting to note here that the CID (Criminal Investigating Department) arrested 22 suspects from the STF (Special Task Force), where the first accused was the same person. The proceedings commenced on September 15,1995 at the Magistrates Courts of Colombo. After four hearings - on February 15, 1996, August 2, 1996, September 12, 1996 and December 12, 1996, the case was removed from the courts roll on March 13,1997, as the prosecution (which was the Government) was not present in court. Now these perpetrators are back in active service. I now understand that the government has dropped the matter entirely, falsely claiming that the bodies were not identified.

On September 9,1990, at about 8:00 p.m., the army made an announcement in the villages of Saturukondan, Panichaiyady and Pillaiyarady, falling within the Batticaloa municipal limits, for everyone to come to the main road. In all a total of 181 Tamil villagers from these three villages were taken by the army and later massacred. This included 33 children under 10 years of age and about 68 women. No action has been taken by the government

● On June 22,1991,67 innocent Tamil civilians were massacred by the Sri Lankan Army at Kokkadicholai, a village on the western shore of Batticoloa. This was a retaliatory act for the killing of three soldiers in a landmine in that village. The bodies of all victims were put in the crater and burned where the landmine explosion had been. I took up the matter with the late President Premadasa and a Presidential Commission of inquiry, headed by a noted Supreme Court Judge was appointed to inquire into this incident. The Commission, in its final findings, came out with a report that the army was responsible for the killings and they accused one Captain Kudilegama as the offender. He was dismissed from the army, but two months later was given a higher position in a state corporation. Nothing more happened.

● On August 9,1992 the army

massacred innocent civilians at Mailanthanai, a village bordering the Batticaloa and Polonarawa districts. In this massacre 36 civilians were killed and 35 were seriously wounded. Half of the civilians killed and injured were women and children. Twenty two army officers were arrested by the police and non-summary proceedings were conducted in the Magistrate Court of Polonaruwa. In 1994 the case was committed to the High Court. Up to now the case has not yet been listed by the Attorney General to be taken up by the High Court.

● On August 22,1992, Muslim Homeguards entered the Tamil village of Puthukudiyiruppu and killed 16 innocent Tamil fishermen and seriously injured 15 others. No legal or departmental action has been taken against the offenders to date.

A severe threat to my life

For exposing all these violations by the Sri Lankan army I was once severely warned by the Joint Operation Commander of East that I must stop all these or otherwise they would not allow me to step into my electorate. This warning I felt was a severe threat to my life, and informed not only the then-President, but also embassies in Colombo. Nevertheless I continued to expose such atrocities even today, risking my life in the hands of many such forces.

1994-1995

I would like to mention here that the human rights situation improved during 1994- 1995 and there was a marked decline in the violations by the security Forces. The reason for same can be attributed to the foreign aid consortium Countries threatening to suspend aid until human rights improved in Sri Lanka and because of protests by the international community in general, including many NGOs.

Serious Violations Since 1995 With Continuing impunity

Since mid- 1995 there has been a rapid increase in the violations by the security forces, especially in the years 1996-1997. Although there have been no large scale civilian massacres, the people face greater hardships than at any time before. Apart from rising cases of disappearances and extrajudicial killings while in the custody of Sri Lankan security forces, there has been continuous harassment arbitrary arrests, torture and detention. Rapes by security forces have increased during the last year and also indiscriminate shelling and bombing of civilian areas from army camps. This results in the dislocation of civilians from their original places of habitation. Civilians are unable to farm or fish; their main occupations. Despite this, food and medicines are not allowed by the Government to the displaced Tamil civilians in the "uncleared" areas.

During the past six months in my district. disappearances and extrajudicial killings by security forces have been on the average of seven per month. As an example, I shall cite a few cases of extra-judicial killings, rapes and other violations by security forces, during one month - March, 1997.

● On March 7, 1997 a Tamil youth, Gomez Antonyraj, aged 22, was on his way to open his small shop. At 6:00 a.m. he was picked up by a police officer and later found shot dead on the roadside in Batticaloa town. The following day, March 8, 1997, another Tamil youth, aged 21, was shot dead at about 7:00 p.m. in the town area. Evidence of this murder points to the same police officer that committed the crime the previous day. On March 11, 1997 another Tamil youth, aged 18, was picked up from his house at Kallady, a village within the Batticoloa Municipal Council limits, at around 4:00 PM. The same police officer, along with a few others, masked their faces with black linen and came to the house in a white unmarked van without a number plate. The people in the house had identified the police officer as the same person involved in the previous two crimes. Half-an-hour later, people heard gunshot sounds. At 7:00 p.m. the body of the boy was handed over to the Batticaloa Hospital mortuary. On a complaint made by me to the Brigadier of the area, I was informed that this boy had a revolver in his possession and he was trying to shoot the police, and the police had to act in self defence. He was purposely branded as LTTE to cover up the killing.

● **On March 17, 1997, two sisters, namely Velan Rasammah (38), a widow, and her sister, Nalliah Dharshini (28), were raped by four army soldiers at Thannamunai, a village 6 km north of Batticaloa.** The incident took place at 11:00 p.m. I lodged a complaint with the local head of the army and the Senior Superintendent of Police of the district. An identification parade was held in the court, where 150 soldiers were present. Only one soldier was identified by the victims. Although a case has been filed in the Magistrate's Court of Batticaloa, the accused has been bailed out.

● On March 22, a gruesome murder was committed by the police, where a middle-aged couple from the Burgher Community was shot. Mrs. Mervyn Ockerz (52) shot in the head and died on the spot. Her husband, Kingsley Ockerz (55) was seriously wounded and admitted to the Batticaloa General Hospital. They were shot in their residence at Iruthaya puram, a village close to Bauicaloa town. Here again the evidence leads to the suspicion of the same police officer who was involved in the previous three murders of youths. The reason for the killings was attributed to the son of the victims who was forcibly registered in marriage to a girl with whom a police sub-inspector had an affair. In order to escape from the involvement, the sub-inspector forcibly registered this boy to this girl. The parents - Mr. and Mrs. Ockerz, and the son made representation to the Senior Superintendent of Police in the area and subsequently the sub-inspector was interdicted from service and a case was filed in the Magistrate's Court of Batticaloa. The hearing of this case was held on March 16, 1997. The attempt by the police was to kill the boy in order to cover up evidence and as a retaliatory act, but the boy sleeping in the house with his parents fortunately escaped by running away from the place. Although many representations were made by me against the particular police officer by name in regard to all these extrajudicial killings, no action has been taken against him. He still continues in active service.

Gang rape of Koneswary mother of 3 children

● On May 17, 1997 Murugesa pillai Koneswary (35) mother of three children, was gang-raped and murdered by policemen attached to the Central Camp police station in the 11th Colony in the border of the Batticoloa-Amparai districts. It appears that from evidence of relatives and the husband of the deceased that the offenders of this crime, after raping this woman, had thrown a grenade into her abdomen in order to cover up any medical evidence of rape. This brutal act was brought to the notice of the President by me and she promptly took action and ordered a fresh inquiry into this inhuman and barbaric act. The body of the woman was exhumed and sent to the government analyst for examination. However, nobody has been taken into custody in this matter.

Alarming rate of rape cases

The alarming rate at which rapes were committed in my constituency during the past two years is of great concern to all who value human rights. Many women's organizations in the district and elsewhere are up in arms against this barbaric crime committed on innocent Tamil women. Though estimates vary, it can easily be calculated at around 100. But most of the victims never speak out openly or complain to authorities because of social constraints. Tamil custom is such that if a Tamil girl is molested or raped she is looked upon as a social untouchable. She will have no place in the society and nobody will like to marry the girl. Therefore, in order to avoid the prevalent social factor the crime concerned is concealed. However, a few have been reported and we known publicly. They include the three I have described above. Nothing has been done by the government.

● Another rape incident was that of a Tamil woman who was taking lunch to her husband who was working in the paddy field. This incident took place in the village of Mandur on December 31, 1996. The perpetrators are three STF (Special Task Force) personnel attached to the Vallavethy STF Camp. The other is the rape in a house at a village, Thiyavaddavan, Valaichenai, where the mother, daughter and another woman were raped by members of the Sri Lankan army on January 9, 1997. Apart from these seven rape incidents the other rapes are concealed because of the reason explained above, and also because of retaliatory acts by the security forces.

● On June 14, 1997 three farmers, namely Kandiah Shanmugam, Banda Thangavelu and Kubarasappu Selvanayagam, after irrigating their paddy fields, went to close the sluice gate of the Weligakandiya Tank. They were taken into custody by the army. There are witnesses to this incident, since a few other farmers working in the fields saw the army taking these three men along with them. Up to now their whereabouts are not known. When the wives of these three farmers made inquiries at the army camps in the area they drew a blank. It is feared that all three were killed while in army custody.

Indiscriminate shelling of civilian areas from army and police camps has resulted in the displacement of most of the civilians from their places of original habitation. In many villages in the Batticaloa district it has become a routine practice for the civilian population to move from their homes almost every evening and seek shelter in the nearest temple or church, for fear of shelling and mortar firing from army and police camps, and in the mornings go back to their houses. During the past six months of this year, an estimated 37 civilians were killed and another 30 wounded as a result ofshelling of civilian areas. This includes a few children and two infants. The economy of the district depends on agriculture and fishing. Because of security reasons, these two sectors have been badly affected, resulting in the disruption of fishing and agriculture.

Besides, every Tamil household in the district has to exhibit a notice in the entrance door of the house indicating the names of the occupants of the house, giving their National Identity Card number, etc. This is not required for Muslims or Sinhalese. These names have to be registered in the nearest police station. Supposing a relative or friend visits the house and stays overnight without informing the police and by any chance any raid takes place in the house, on that night the new occupant of the house would be taken into custody for questioning and sometimes detained for days until clearance is obtained and frequently tortured.

The Sri Lankan security forces continue to torture and mistreat detainees, both male and female, during interrogation and at the time of arrest. The methods of torture included beatings by baton, assault, beating the soles of the feet, burning, etc. Also, suspension by the feet where the head lies downwards and the rope turned so that the body of the victim rotates. He is beaten and chilli powder thrown in his face, and at times his face covered with polythene bag with water, where he finds it extremely difficult to breathe. Torture and ill treatment is widespread, with several people dying in custody. Some of the stories related to me personally and in writing by many of the Tamil youths who were detained and tortured are so horrifying, one cannot imagine whether such inhuman and cruel methods are used in a civilized society.

Rev.Fr. Miller: American Jesuit priest

The other Tamil militant groups, armed by and working with the military, commit similar crimes, including torture and extrajudicial killings. In this connection, a letter written to me by Rev. Fr. B.H. Miller, S.J., an American Jesuit priest who had been residing in Batticaloa for the past 45 years, is of importance. Fr. Miller is actively involved with the Batticaloa District Peace Committee for the past ten years. In his letter he states, "We are informed that boys are being abducted, kidnapped by Tamil groups in the guise of recruitment, heads shaved, forced to sign enrollment papers, and sent without further ado to battle in the Vanni (Vavuniya). This they surely are doing under pressure from the army to find soldiers for the front. They gain marks for providing cannon fodder. And this is a gross form of human rights violations." These groups are paid by the Government for each person recruited.

Human Rights Violations of Tamils in Other Districts

Although I have given only the human rights violations committed by the security forces in my district, the same pattern of severe violations, including harassment, arbitrary arrest, torture, detention, disappearances while in the custody of the security forces, and rape takes place in other districts of the North East, including Jaffna, and even in the city of Colombo and suburbs. Batticaloa can be taken up as a yardstick to measure the violations in the other areas mentioned above. In Jaffna alone there have been hundreds of disappearances and many rapes with a few months of its occupation by the army in 1996. The government has appointed a committee of military officers to investigate the disappearances.

Harassment of Tamil civilians in the city of Colombo and the suburbs has become a nightmare for the Tamils living in these areas. Only Tamils are required to register with the police. Their houses are being raided in the night at ungodly hours and the households, including women and children, are taken to the nearest police station and detained, frequently resulting in extorting money. This has become a daily occurrence in the city of Colombo and suburbs.

Tamils harassed at the airport

The latest harassment, particularly in the month of June this year, is something serious meted out to the Tamils in the Bandaranaike International Airport (formerly Colombo Airport). As soon as a Tamil enters the airport for travel abroad he is looked upon in suspicion. In case by any chance airport immigration authorities find that any one of the travel documents is suspected forged (in many instances purposely so determined by the officer as forged documents in order to harass a Tamil), the passenger is handed over to the airport police tor investigation and he is charged under the Emergency Regulations and the Prevention of Terrorism Act(PTA). But if on the same offence the person arrested belongs to the majority Sinhalese or the Muslim community, he is charged under normal Immigration and Emigration laws. This is a clear case of discrimination meted out only to the Tamils.

The Human Rights Task Force (HRTF), which hitherto monitored the human rights violations, although not well, and had its office in Colombo and in a few districts of the North East, was dismantled by a Gazette notification issued by the President on June 23, 1997. According to the Gazette notification the HRTF ceases to function with effect from June 30, 1997. The reason given by the government is that a National Human Rights Commission had been appointed, therefore the NHRC will look after the entire human rights violations. But at the time of announcement, the NHRC had not got of the ground and it has so far not established any regional office in the North East. Therefore, the closure of the HRTF will create a vacuum, thereby driving the Tamils to the mercy of the Sri Lankan security forces, which would eventually end up in more and more human rights violations. Although the government has extended the functioning of the HRTF Regional Coordinators for a further period of one month, until July 31, 1997, it is doubtful whether the newly established NHRC would be able to establish its regional offices within this period to meet the vacuum created by the closure of the HRTF.

N
chiravely
Vakarai
ankerni
chchenai
anthively
Batticaloa
chanludy
Araipattai
palayam
Baldella
Kallar

The recent offensive by the Sri Lankan Army to open up a land route to Jaffna has resulted in the displacement of an estimated 200,000 civilians from their original places of habitation, adding to the earlier hundreds of thousands of displaced Tamils. Many hundreds of families are wandering in the jungles of Mullaithivu and many thousands have moved to Vavuniya to be locked up in detention camps. They are not allowed by the government and military to relocate themselves in the areas their choice, even in Vavuniya town or Colombo or other Tamil areas like Batticaloa and Trincomalee. They are detained in severe conditions under army control and even the ICRC and UNHCR or NGOs are not allowed into the camps.

CONCLUSION

It is my considered opinion that the government / Es policy of "War for Peace'5 is failing, not only because of limited progress in military operations and its devolution package (which is very much watered down from the August, 1995 proposals), but also, especially because it is causing more and more hardships and misery and human rights violations to the Tamils. The Tamils have lost faith with the Government.

Therefore, I earnestly appeal to the U.S. Government to press the Sri Lankan Government to take the following actions in support of human rights. The LTTE should also cooperate on these actions:

1. Punish the perpetrators who enjoy impunity under the present extreme anti-terrorism and emergency laws, including effective steps taken to punish the perpetrators of past and present crimes on innocent civilians. No human rights improvement is possible until these laws are drastically changed.

2. Allow the media and the NGOs to visit the affected areas without any restrictions.

3. Allow adequate food supplies and medicines to the affected and uncleared areas in the North East and NGOs to operate freely in humanitarian work.

4. Do away with the detention camps in Vavuniya and allow the refugees to relocate themselves in the places of their choice.

5. Allow an "International Observation" team to be present in the the affected North East and to report on conditions there.

Until these actions are taken by the Sri Lankan Government, especially the presence of a team of observers in the North East, the U.S. should suspend its support to Sri Lanka, especially military support. It was similar action by the international community, under the Foreign Aid Consortium, which brought about an improvement in 1993-1994.

The intensification and escalation of the conflict has been viewed with alarm by all those who value human rights and humanitarian norms. The immediate impact of such a conflict on defenseless civilians is immense. They are subjected to heavy artillery attacks and bombings. The flow of food items and medicines to the war-affected areas has been severely curtailed by the governments embargo, causing immense hardship and misery to the affected civilians. An unknown number are dying and sick. The international relief agencies and non-governmental organizations continue to encounter restrictions with regard to their operations. For example, the Quaker Peace and the Peace Brigade, two international NGOs who were helpful to displaced Tamils in uncleared areas in my district, have been disbarred since April, 1997 from doing any operations in the Batticaloa District. In addition, the media and other independent observers are not allowed to visit the affected areas.

In addition, there are about 1700 Tamil youths detained in prisons, police stations and various unidentified detention camps without any trial or investigation. Out of this, about 300 are languishing in prison for the past five years without being brought to trial. The slow process in disposing of these cases by the Attorney General's Department is causing much alarm and anxiety among the parents and relatives of the detainees.

The U.S. Government's approval for the "Green Berets" to give training to the Sri Lankan security forces is causing alarm and concern to the Tamil people. The U.S. support to the Sri Lankan Government is giving a moral encouragement to the Sri Lankan security forces to engage in more and more human rights violations against the Tamils. ■

DEVOLUTION IN THE U.K. AND SRI LANKA.

Adrian Wijemanne

I.Democracy in the U.K. is based on many commonly held convictions on a variety of subjects. One of these is the Universal understanding that Scottish, Welsh and Irish people resident in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland have the right to decide, by a majority decision of their own, on the nature of their governance. This is the right that is denied to the Tamil population of the northeast province of Sri Lanka by the Sri Lanka government and by the Sinhala people as a whole.

2. In the U.K. it is perfectly legal for political parties in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland (and even in England) to advocate, and work openly for, the complete sovereign independence of each of these regions from the U.K. resulting in the division of the U.K. into separate states. For many years there have been political parties which do just this - the Scottish National Party (SNP, currently led by Alex Salmond,MP) in Scotland, Plaid Cymru (PC, currently led by Dafydd Wigley,MP) in Wales and Sinn Fein (SF, currently led by Gerry Adams,MP) in Northern Ireland. Each of these parties has MPs elected to the British House of Commons.

In Sri Lanka the very opposite is the case. Since 1983 it is illegal to advocate independence for any region which would result in the break-up of the unitary, single-all-island state of Sri Lanka into separate states. Representation in the Sri Lankan parliament is available only to those political parties which foreswear any such aspiration.

3. At successive general elections in the U.K. the great majority of MPs from Scotland and Wales have been from the Labour Party and only a small (but in Scotland a growing) number have been from the separatist parties. In Northern Ireland, similarly, the great majority of MPs have been from the Ulster Unionist Parties with a very small number from Sinn Fein.

In Sri Lanka the opposite is the case. The majority of MPs from the northern and eastern provinces taken as a whole at the general election of 1977 (the last general election before the outbreak of war) were from the Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF) which was committed at that time to securing a separate state in the northern and eastern provinces for the Tamil majority resident therein.

4. There are different responses by the three major political parties in the U.K. to the separatist tendency in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland but all are united in a desire to preserve the Union i.e.the U.K. as a single state. The Conservatives hope to do this by spelling out, in rather general terms, the advantages of the Union and the disadvantages of separation. It is an appeal to economic and material well-being. The Labour Party hopes to preserve the Union by devolving substantial powers over local affairs (including taxation in Scotland) to separate parliaments in Scotland and Wales. The Liberal Democratic Party believes the Union will survive only under a formal federal constitution with separate legislative and executive bodies in each region (England as well) and an over-arching central government for defence, foreign affairs, currency management and economic stability. In respect of Northern Ireland all three parties are agreed that the will of the majority of the resident population there for the continuance of the Union must prevail. None of these political parties and, indeed, not a single individual in the 56 million population of the U.K. believes it either right or possible to suppress the separatist tendencies in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland by military force.

In Sri Lanka the opposite of this belief is near universal - the Sri Lanka government and the overwhelming majority of the Sinhala people believe it to be both right and possible for Tamil separatist nationalism in the north-east province to be crushed by military force whereafter a limited devolution of powers not only to the Tamil dominated north-east province but also to other regions of the country would assuage the separatist inclination in the former and satisfy the desire for participatory democracy in the latter.

5. At the general election held in the U.K. on 1st May '97 the Conservative Party failed, for the very first time in its history, to win a single parliamentary seat in Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland; all 167 seats won by it were in England, one of the 4

constituent countries of the U.K. The Labour Party, promising substantial devolution of powers to local parliaments to be newly created for the purpose, won overwhelmingly in Scotland and Wales. The Ulster Unionist Parties promising to preserve the Union in all essentials, won in Northern Ireland. In fulfilment of its promises the new Labour government held referenda in Scotland and Wales within 4 months of its assumption of office, to ascertain the wishes of the residents of each region on the subject of devolution. In both regions the majority voted in favour of the government's devolution proposals and the necessary institutions are to be set up in each region by fresh legislation in time to commence functioning from the year 2000.

In Sri Lanka despite the vote at a general election, of the overwhelming majority of the resident population (Tamil dominated) of the northern and eastern provinces for independence, no significant devolution of powers was proposed; instead military repression of the by now-armed separatist movements was launched. After 4 years of war the Indian-backed devolution of powers to countrywide provincial councils failed to arrest the Tamil nationalist determination for total independence. Since then 10 further years of warfare portend a long and unwinnable military imbroglio for one of the world's poorest states.

6. It is appropriate now to take a brief look back to an earlier experiment with devolution in the U.K. In 1979, the Labour government led by Jim Callaghan held referenda in Scotland and Wales to ascertain the views of their respective populations on devolution. In Scotland the vote on that occasion fell short of the 40% (of those voting) required for devolution. In Wales the vote was 4 to 1 in favour of continuing the existing Union. In the 18 years that have elapsed from 1979 to 1997 there has been a substantial growth in the separatist tendency in each territory. Only time will tell whether the devolution now to be implemented will arrest this tendency or exacerbate it. In the latter event, if separation becomes inevitable, it will be resorted to by peaceful means without recourse to force either for or against.

Alex Salmond, Scottish National Party.

7. It is an interesting and very significant fact that in the 18 years between the two referenda in Scotland and Wales, both regions received especially favoured treatment by the government. To use an American phrase there was "reverse discrimination" on a substantial scale. Government expenditure per capita in each of these regions was, and is, considerably higher than in England. It is so in Northern Ireland as well though no referendum was held there either in 1979 or this year. Benign government failed to assuage nationalist aspirations in all three territories. **Discrimination against a people is not necessary for nationalist separatism to grow. Irrespective of whether a government is discriminatory or benign, nationalist aspirations grow; discrimination merely converts them into a tinder box ready to explode at the first attempt at military suppression.**

8. Earlier in this paper mention was made of the universal understanding in the U.K. that military force was not to be used to preserve the integrity of the state from break-up by internal separatist pressures. It was not always so. For 300 years ending in 1922 the British state used military force against Irish nationalist separatist guerillas, who fought to secure an independent state for themselves on the island of Ireland where the Irish constituted the majority of the resident population. That great effort failed to extinguish Irish nationalism. It is that bitter experience of successive British governments in their own backyard that lies at the root of the current accommodating attitude towards nationalist secession. It determined also, the policy of accommodation towards the Indian independence movement which led to post-World War II decolonization.

9. The current policies of the Labour and Liberal Democratic Parties - devolution and federalism respectively - hope to arrest the tide of nationalism from a drift to outright separation and independence. Such a hope can be rationally entertained only before a separatist movement takes to arms in support of its cause. They have no utility as a means of ending an armed conflict between the state and separatist nationalist guerillas as the British experience in Ireland, mentioned above, so vividly illustrates. There a raft of Home Rule legislation, ending with the Home Rule Act of 1912, failed to arrest the tide of armed insurrection or the eventual splitting up of the U.K. into two in 1922.

10. Both the U.K. and Sri Lanka face armed separatist nationalists today. In the U.K. the armed conflict is in Northern Ireland where the IRA carry out an urban guerilla campaign, which spills over into mainland Britain

from time to time, with the object of separating the province of Northern Ireland from the U.K. and joining it to the Irish Republic. Only a minority of the Roman Catholic minority of the population of Northern Ireland support the IRA in that effort. The Protestant majority in Northern Ireland opposes separation from the U.K. and wants the Union to continue as at present. Despite the support of only a minority of the population and being outnumbered 100 to 1 by the British forces in Northern Ireland the IRA has kept the conflict going for 29 years and it is by no means over yet though a ceasefire is currently in force.

11. In Sri Lanka the situation is different both qualitatively and quantitatively. The Tamil decision to establish a separate state for themselves in the north-east province had the support of the overwhelming majority (69%) of voters in this area at a general election The LTTE, which is the armed separatist group fighting for independence, seeks to implement that majority vote. The IRA and the LTTE are, therefore, qualitatively different - the former opposed by the majority and the latter acting in accord with the already publicly expressed will of the majority of their people.

Quantitatively the difference between the two is as polar. Whereas the IRA is known to number around 300 fighters the LTTE is 30 times that number. Whereas the IRA is opposed by the formidable forces of the British army and the British state, the LTTE is opposed by much less powerful adversaries in the Sri Lanka army and the Sri Lanka state. The IRA has kept the conflict going for 29 years now; the LTTE for 14 and is undoubtedly capable of many more decades of conflict.

12. Devolution in the U.K., in Scotland and Wales, is expected to stave off, at least for the time being, a nationalist drive for total separation and independence. Only time will tell whether this object will be achieved or whether the opposite will be realised i.e. whether it will fuel the fires of separation. In Sri Lanka much more is expected of devolution - that it will end a bitter war now in its 15th year by weaning the Tamil people of the north-east province away from their desire for independence and their support for the LTTE, thus leading to the latter's demise. The dice of history are loaded heavily against such a consummation. ■

Disabled Sinhala soldier condemns Sinhala politicians

Speaking at a public meeting held in the Ampara town hall recently, Commander H.K Dayaratne, president of the association representing the permanently wounded soldiers of the Sri Lankan army, condemned Sinhala politicians for opportunistically seeking political advantage by carrying on with the war in the Tamil homelands.

The meeting was organised by the Ampara district branch of the association. Commander Dayaratne lost his arm in an LTTE attack on the Elephant pass camp where he was in charge of a Sri Lankan unit. Lambasting the People's Alliance government's attitude towards the thousands of soldiers who continue to be maimed in the war, he said:

"Only very poor Sinhala youth join the army. They do so to help their families eke out a living. No one from the President's family or the opposition leader's family joins the armed forces."

"Today there are more than twenty thousand permanently wounded Sinhala soldiers languishing in silence in many corners of the country. Although our politicians say that the conflict should be solved through negotiations, their ulterior vested interest is to carry on with the war."

"Why are Tamil youth taking up arms? Why do they commit suicide [rather than surrender]? Who betrayed them? These are questions which the Sinhala people should think about."

"Who is responsible today for these twenty thousand maimed [Sinhala] youth? There are few youth joining the army now because they are losing faith in our politicians. Even the criteria for recruitment have been brought down."

"This government keeps raising the price of bread and dhal. The people who depend on this (cheap)food are the families of the maimed soldiers. We cannot allow this situation to continue."

Since the Sri Lankan army launched its latest and biggest offensive in the north of the island, there has been a massive influx of permanently wounded soldiers. In heavy fighting on Tuesday, over 200 Sri Lankan soldiers were wounded according to government figures.

The 90,000 strong Sri Lankan army is overwhelmingly Sinhalese. Despite repeated recruitment drives, there are few volunteers, and up to 10,000 men desert each year, according to military analysts.

The Commander's outburst reflects the growing bitterness in rural Sinhala areas over what is perceived as the Chandrika regime's sheer and callous lack of concern for human lives.

(Tamil Net)

M.K. SRI & Co

SOLICITORS
ADMINISTRATORS OF OATHS

Please contact: Mr. M.K.Sritharan

5 Eastcote Lane
South Harrow
Middx
HA2 8BW

Tel: 0181- 423 2141
Fax: 0181- 933 1361

Anglo Asian

Sri Lankan & South Indian Groceries

Under new Management

Tel: 0181 900 2451

513 High Road, Wembley,
Middlesex

Samras Video Club

For all popular Audios & Videos. Sale, Rental & Recording

Tel: 0181 767 7708
Fax: 0181 672 9683

1ST Floor, above Prime Foods
118 Tooting High Street
London SW17 0RR

Matrimonial Consultant

Matches arranged irrespective of age

Contact: 0181 698 5356

Dunster House
Bromley Road
Catford
London SE6 2TB

Katpakam

Cash & Carry

The traditional Tamil Eelam Shop

at economical prices

Products selected and imported from various countries to suit your Tamil taste

Sole agents for:
Tamil magazines llike
Kumutham,Bommai,
Anmigam etc. etc. etc.

Tel: 0181-694 8810

36, Loampit Hill, London SE13 7SW

24 Hour Service
7 Days A Week

PARTHI

Transport Service

We take you to any Destination. We offer very Competitive prices. Courteous & Prompt Service.

Cars & Mini Buses Available for Weddings, Tours, Airports or any other occasions. Also Collections and Deliveries

Hot line Bookings: 0181 472 4953, 471 6744 Mobile: 0956 307 442, 957423

If what happened to the Tamils, happened to the Scottish & Welsh...?

Brangwyn Crescent
Merton
London

Tamil woman doctor's plea sent to British M.Ps

I would be most grateful if you could spare a few moments to read my letter to you.

As a Tamil originally from Jaffna Sri-Lanka who has lived in the UK for most of my life I can see many parallels between the Scots who have already decided for their own parliament and the Welsh people who have voted on the issue of devolution of power from the British Government, and that of the Tamil people of Sri-Lanka.

The United Kingdom as you are aware, is made up of four distinct nationalities; English, Scots, Welsh and Irish. So too, the Island of Sri-Lanka is made up of two distinct nationalities; the Sinhala people of the south and the Eelam Tamils of the North and East, brought together to form the artificially formed unitary state of Ceylon by the British Colonialists. Like the Scots, Welsh and Irish we each, have our own language and culture. **Unlike in Scotland and Wales where true democracy has allowed each nation to maintain its identity, the Tamil speaking people of Sri-Lanka have been suppressed from day one of Independence in 1948 when the majority Sinhala people took power over the island.**

Let me ask you to imagine this situation:

- Imagine that the UK government in London refused Citizenship to the Scottish or Welsh people living in England making them a stateless people.

- Imagine that the UK government then made English the official language of the island and no official signs or forms of communication could be made in Gaelic or Welsh.

- Imagine that the UK government introduced standardisation in education. Students from England being given greater advantages to enter higher education and Universities compared to those from Scotland and Wales. Education no longer being available on the basis of merit but on the region of the island you originated from.

- Imagine that the UK Government then denied investment in Scotland and Wales and industries were not encouraged to be built there.

- Imagine that the UK Government forcibly took land away from the Scottish and Welsh people and forcibly repatriated English people from the South into those areas in order to change the demography with names of ancient Scottish and Welsh villages being given English names. Scottish and Welsh Churches destroyed and replaced with Anglican Churches.

- Imagine that peaceful demonstrations against all the above was then met by state sponsored violence. Scottish and Welsh political groups were bought by the English dominated UK government to keep their silence. And the voice of the Scottish and Welsh people was met by oppression. And then when Scottish and Welsh Politicians stood for election on the grounds that they would fight by any means for an independent Scottish or Welsh state and won a majority of their seats indicating that the Scottish and Welsh people had voiced their choice for separate or autonomous states. The English then banned these very same Scottish and Welsh political groups. There was now no longer a voice for the oppressed Scottish and Welsh people. What would they have done? Would the frustrated young have taken up arms?

- Imagine that this happened in Scotland and Wales and a full scale war was in progress. During that war the international media were banned from seeing the true events in Scotland or Wales and only received information from London. That International NGO's were restricted in their work and could not openly speak out about bombings of Churches full of refugees or school children in the fear that their good work would cease and they would be banned from the island. If human rights organisations like Amnesty International were restricted access to areas to gain information about torture and rape and as a result the world would be ignorant to the true brutal situation of the war. Imagine that during this war the English then named it a War for Peace but still indiscriminately targeted civilians.

● Imagine that a hollow devolution package full of words but little substance was put forward not to the Scottish or the Welsh but to the English in the South to decide on the fate of their neighbours. What would the Scots and the Welsh have done?

I thank god that the situation that I have described above did not happen to either the Scots or the Welsh as there is true democracy and that the peoples of Scotland and Wales have decided for themselves when they voted on the issue of devolution. That **their** voice was heard and not that the of English in the South of the island.

I also thank god that the United Kingdom is a country that takes in refugees from countries of the world where there are conflicts, since so many of my people have been able to seek refuge here in the UK.

Unfortunately the Tamil speaking people of the state of Eelam in the island of Sri-Lanka have undergone all the above and even today the world at large ignores their plight. The devolution package put forward by the Sinhala dominated state government will not be presented to the Tamil people of the North and East but to the Sinhala people of the South to decide!

I therefore appeal to you and the community that you are from, that has so many similarities to ours, to please hear our voice and stand with us against the atrocities and human rights abuses taking place against innocent people. **Sri-Lanka is an island with two nations in as much as United Kingdom is an island w four nations**

I appeal to you and the British g ernment to put pressure on the Sinh dominated SriLankan governmen pull out of the occupied areas in Tamil homeland and start negotiati with the true representatives of Tamil people who remain in Sri-La through a respected international t party.

The silence of the suffer innocent has gone un heard for long and it is time the internatio community opened their eyes to true picture of the Sri-Lankan c flict.

Yours Sincer

Dr Shiamala Suntharaling

Take a cue from Britain, Colombo Tamils tell govt.

The Action Group of Tamils in Colombo (AGOTIC) invites the Sinhala nation to face the fact that the break - up of Sri Lanka is inevitable, says a statement by the organisation released recently.

AGOTIC states: “The unitary state in Sri Lanka was created 182 years ago in 1815 by the British colonial rulers. The unitary state in Britain was established almost three centuries ago. Wales was subjugated by England in the 16th century and it was “legally” annexed by the Act of Union of 1535. England conquered Scotland and absorbed it in the 18th century under the Act of Union of 1707. Thus the unitary state of Britain dates back to 1707.

“Within one week in September 1997, all this became history.. On September 12 and 19, 1997, the people of Scotland and Wales voted to set up their own Parliaments. The Scottish National Party has targeted the year 2007 as the date for the full and complete independence of Scotland from Britain. Welsh independence will certainly follow.......

“Faced with Scottish and We separatism, British Prime Minister T Blair did not make statements ab threats to “territorial integrity” or “nat al sovereignty”. Neither did he dep the British army, navy and air force police to defend the socalled unit state of Britain.....

“In contrast, it would appear that Lanka belongs to the Neanderthal of cave politics. Sri Lankan Sinhal politicians ... have deployed the Sinh army to defend the so-called unit state at the expense of harmony am the different ethnic communities... T have successfully reduced a once r tively prosperous Ceylon into a bas case which today epitomises polit chaos, economic decline and so decay”.

Suicides in Sri Lanka reaching alarming proportion

Sri Lankans were committing suicide at an alarming rate of at least 27 a day, according to a Colombo report.

“It has been revealed that since the 1960s around 10,000 people commit suicide annually in Sri Lanka,” Karunatissa Athukorale, a senior sociology lecturer at the Peradeniya University told a workshop in Colombo. Experts say poverty is the main reason for suicides in the country of 18 million. But residents have also had to cope with the stress of a bloody separatist rebellion by Tamil rebels since 1983 that has claimed tens of thousands of live.

The most common method of suicide is to ingesting insecticide, which is freely available. “The rate of suicides in the country have increased to alarming proportions and it has become a major social problem,” Athukorale said at the workshop, titled “Prevention of suicides and social integration.”

He said a recent survey he co ducted that 55 out of every 100,000 Lankans took their own lives ea year. The sociologist estimated t more than 175,000 people have kil themselves since 1950. “More th 75 percent of the victims are male Athukorale said. President Chandr Kumaratunga last year appointed committee to study the problem as Lanka is believed to have one of t the highest suicide rates in the wor

Letters

"Tamils in Malaysia endorse the Eelam struggle"

Dear S. Sivanayagam,

This is to inform that we Tamils in Malaysia have fully endorsed the struggle for Eelam. Over the years, we have tried our very best to provide whatever support for the just cause despite meeting obstacles.

Organizations such as the World Tamil Relief Fund, World Tamil Trust and others have been set up to coordinate and mobilize both material and non-material support for Eelam.

We strongly condemn the atrocities committed on the Tamil people in Sri Lanka by the SLAF and the police. The inability to defeat the LTTE is one clear proof that the Sinhalese racist state cannot force Tamils into submission.

For Tamils in Malaysia, the struggle for Eelam is not something remote, but part and parcel of the Tamil race worlwide to seek dignity and justice. LTTE leader V.Prabhakaran is a source of pride and dignity for Tamils in Malaysia.

I would like to subscribe for Hot Spring with immediate effect. If you take credit card orders, please inform me.

Assoc Prof P. Ramasamy
Dept of Political Science
National University of Malaysia
43600 Bangi, Selangor, Malaysia
Fax: 603-8252836
Tel: 603-8364429

* * * * *

Why no War Report on Sri Lanka ?

Dear Editor,

Attached please find a photocopy of the list of contents of the September issue of WAR REPORT published by The Institute for War & Peace Reporting, Lancaster House, 33, Islington High Street, London N1 9LH

As you will see, there are three reports on Bosnia, one on Serbia, two on Montenegro, one on Albania, one on Chechnya and so on, plus special features on Turkey, Greece and Greece. The Institute for War & Peace Reporting is claimed to be an "independent, conflict-monitoring and media-support charity working to inform the international debate on conflict and provide a forum and other support for voices of moderation caught in war".

Let alone other conflict areas in Asia and Africa, it is strange that the 15-year conflict in Sri Lanka does not seem to interest a journal of this kind. If the publication's mandate is confined only to Europe,it seems a pity. **Besides, when there are western war correspondents prepared to venture into dangerous war zones elsewhere, why do they not even attempt to do so in Sri Lanka, by meekly accepting a government ban? Shouldn't their professional curiosity be aroused at least by a war that goes on for years without witnesses ?**

N.Sidamparappillai
Tilehurst
Reading, U.K.

* * * * *

Revolutionary Greetings From an Indian reader

Jai Bheem

Dear Editor,

Let me take the oppurtunity of writing for this Tamil voice whose faint feeble tones are also heard in the heartlands of India. **Not far from us are the Tamils of Eelam yet we have to hear this voice from across the English seas.**

To liberate ourselves we have to have a two fold approach; one action and the other thought and only then we can acheive our goal. This is what Ambedkar and Periyar did and won and the Tamil Tigers and Pirabhakaran are achieving.

Ambedkars vision of liberating our Dalit and Backward castes is seen today in the form of revolutionary militancy of the Dalits and the liberating forces of our people are taking on this ideology of Ambedkar.

We have opened an Ambedkar Era in India. From now on everything we write, speak, name is going to be the thoughts of Ambedkar.

The divide and rule policy of the Aryan rulers have failed in dividing us. We were once upon a time made to think that Periyar was a devil incarnate as he founded a non-religious 'Self respect movement'. Many years after his death we have realised the greatness of Periyar and today we dont have an occasion where our Pandals(Marquee) are not adorned with the portraits of Periyar and Ambedkar.

We were made to hate Periyar who was one of us just as much as we were made to hate our leaders in the Puranas and Ithihasas. We celebrated the death of King Bali who was generous enough to part with everything he had to the wicked and cunning Nambodri Aryan brahmin 'Vamana'. **We were made to think our Ravana and Narakasura were demons and devils whilst they were the supreme heroes of our Black Indian culture, who rose to fight the Aryan hordes.**

Today the very same group is trying to demonise the LTTE and its great vehicle Velupillai Pirabha karan.

We call upon all the Tamils of Eelam and Tamilnadu, we call upon all the Dalits and Backward castes to arise to this occasion to support the Liberation of Tamil Eelam and to lift the ban on our fellow organisation the LTTE.

LTTE represents the Tamil people, the original inhabitants of India and Srilanka. Ambedkar has said that Tamil was the language spoken in the whole of India before the Aryans corrupted Tamil to give rise to other tongues. " Tamil is the mother of all our languages and not Sanskrit as we are made to believe" he said.

We are in the Ambedkar Era in India and the Periyar era has been opening in Tamilnadu and the day is not far for the People of Tamil Eelam to see the arising of the Pirabhakaran Era.

The year 2000 we will see the rise of the Dalit in absolute power in India and the Tamils in Tamil Eelam.

In eternal debt to the
Tamil Martyrs

Ramthirth Munda
Jharhkhand
India.

C.J.Eliezer - pride of the Eelam Tamil community

Professor Christie Jayaratnam Eliezer, Chairman of the Australian Federation of Tamil Associations completed his 79th birthday in Melbourne recently, and along with his ever-ebullient wife Ranee, was honoured with a luncheon at the Strathfield Recreation Club by his friends, old students and admirers.

Professor Eliezer is held in immense respect by not only Tamils the world over, but also by members of the Australian public who had known his presence in the country for nearly 30 years, both as Emeritus Professor of Applied Mathematics at La Trobe University, and as a senior citizen devoted to the interests of his suffering fellow Tamils back home. It is a strength to his character that even obscene (computer printed) notices sent to him by some perverse Sinhalese do not deter him from his involvement with the Tamil cause.

Professor Eliezer's academic achievements are legion. Even while at his Jaffna school, Hartley College, Point Pedro, he passed the Cambridge local examinations with Honours and distinctions. At University College, Colombo, he obtained the London degree in Science with First Class Honours. Proceeding to Cambridge on scholarship, he was at Christ's College from 1939 to 1943. In 1941, he got his Mathematics Tripos and the Ph.D. later. As Fellow at Christ's College, he obtained his D.Sc.in 1949.

He was Professor of Mathematics, University of Ceylon, for ten years from 1949, as well as Dean of the Faculty and Deputy Pro Vice Chancellor during that period. From there, he proceeded to Kuala Lumpur where he held the position of foundation Professor of Mathematics at the University of Malaysia for nine years from 1959; as well as functioning as Dean of Science and ViceChancellor during that period.

In 1968 he proceeded to Australia where he was appointed the first Professor of Applied Mathematics at La Trobe University. During his fifteen years of stay there, he served in addition as Dean of Physical Sciences and Deputy Vice-Chancellor.

Thileepan Rememberd

The 10th death anniversary of LTTE martyr, Lt.Col.Thileepan was observed in all the cleared areas of Tamil Eelam from September 15 onwards, the date on which he began his death fast in protest against the Indian army's occupation of the Tamil northeast. After refusing to take even water, Thileepan died on the 12th day of his fast.

A LTTE Press release states: "All over Tamil Eelam, people's hearts have been stirred - as they are every year at this time and they have taken part in acts of dedication and self-sacrifice in his memory. His martyrdom was a milestone in the freedom struggle of the Tamil people.

Other reports state: "Sea sports took place yesterday (22 September) at Nachchikuda harbour (Mulankavil) under the auspices of the Pooneryn Fishermen's Union, in what was the 7th dayday of observance marking the memory of Lt.Col. Thileepan. Boating and rowing competitions featured prominently, while swimming races were the main event at Vallaipadu harbour.

"Meanwhile, a dress cutting and sewing competition was held in the Church of South India premises under the auspiaes of the Pungudutivu-Nainativu multi-purpose cooperative societies.

In Mannar, a mass Shramadana (selfless giving) campaign was launched in Thileepan's memory, in which clean-up projects were carried out by teachers, students and employees of the education service centre and the Typing school.

Tamils in Trincomalee also took part in the Thileepan commemmorations. Memorial meetings were held in Verukal on the 14th and 26th with the entire village taking part in the events. On the 22nd, 23rd and 26th, public meetings were held in Sampur and other villages.

- News Briefs -

Krishanthy case on Nov. 17

The trial at bar in which 8 army personnel and one reserve police constable are charged with the rape and murder of 18-year old Krishanthy Kumarasamy and the murder of her mother, brother and a neighbour in September last year has been put off for November 17.

Bail was refused to the accused when the case was taken up recently.

Explosion at EPDP office

Two suspects, Iruthayarasa Sayedu alias Illangakon alias Kundumani of West Batticaloa and Vanniasingham Gunaseelan alias Siva were arrested in connection with the bomb explosion at the EPDP office in Colombo and were remanded. A senior member of the EPDP, T.Vadivel Raju (32) died due to the grenade explosion. Sinhalese neighbours of the Park Road headquarters of the EPDP have complained to the police about the presence of armed men earlier, but no action was taken by the government.

Lecturer held in Colombo

A lecturer at Batticaloa's Eastern University, Vairamuttu Thivakaran was arrested in Colombo recently under the Emergency regulations. He had been arrested once before in Trincomalee and was released on bail. No reason was given for the second arrest.

Hindus threaten direct action

The President has failed to act on her promise to restore Hindu temples damaged by government bombing and shelling. The organisation will resort to direct action if the President fails to deliver her promise, warns a statement issued by the Hindu Maha Sabha.

The statement alleges that some temple precints were even bulldozed by the army to make way for "security embankments", while at the same time a number of Buddhist viharas were being erected.

New U.S. envoy to Colombo

A career diplomat , Shaun Donnelly, has been named by President Clinton to be the new U.S. ambassador in Sri Lanka. He is reported to be an expert in international economic affairs, and has worked as a diplomat in Egypt, Ethiopia, Mali, Senegal, and Tunisia. The appointment must now be confirmed by the Senate.

Ex-Sinhala Minister raps U.K. envoy

A former Sri Lankan Minister Gamini Jayasuriya has accused the British High Commissioner in Colombo David Tatham of meddling in the internal affairs of Sri Lanka. "He is telling our political leaders how they should act with regard to the package and he is praising the Fox agreement which we have already condemned."

"We ask the British once again to stop interfering with our internal affairs", the statement continues. "They should realise they are no longer our colonial masters... Jayasuriya said.

"U.S., Sri Lanka in major row"

"A diplomatic row has broken between Sri Lanka and the United States with the government being accused of "dishonest practices" after President Chandrika Kumaratunga rescinded an agreement with a top American company for the re-development of the Fort area affected by the Central Bank bomb blast", says the Page 1 lead news item in the SUNDAY LEADER, Colombo, of 28 September.

Premadasa killing: 18 set free

Eighteen Sinhalese who were arrested and detained four years ago in connection with the assassination of former President Premadasa were released by court on 23 September, when prosecutors failed to press charges against them. Twenty two other accused were released last year on the same grounds.

President Premadasa was blown to pieces during a May Day rally in 1993, allegedly by a suicide bomber riding a bicycle.

Killing of a Priest

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has confirmed the murder of Rev Arulpalan of the Jaffna Diocese of the Church of South India whose body was found at Puthumurripu on 9 September 1997.

Rev Arulpalan was taken into custody by the Sri Lankan army on 25 August

1997 while visiting a church farm. The ministry of defense was contacted on 28 August by Church of South India (CSI) officials.

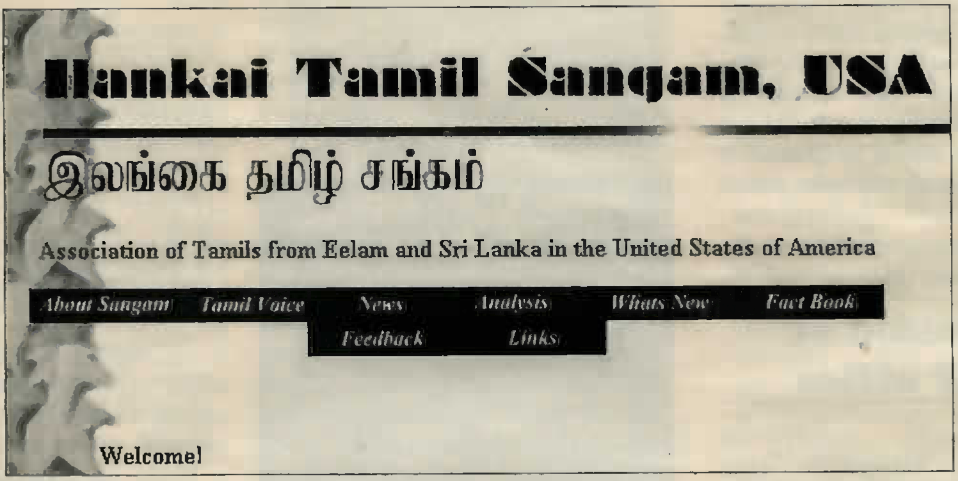
Rev A Jayakumaran, Presbyter and D G Newton, Secretary of the Dioceses have brought this to the attention of the Sri Lankan President and have called for an urgent investigation.

The Rev R F Wootton CEO for the Australian Human Rights Foundation said, that he had spoken with a Tamil priest in Melbourne who spoke of the loving loyal service of the Rev Arulpalan.

Mr. Wootton said he hoped that Australian churches would join with the Church of South India in protesting at the cruel killing of their faithful pastor the Rev Arulpalan.

Ilankai Tamil Sangam

www.sangam.org


Ilankai Tamil Sangam, USA

இலங்கை தமிழ் சங்கம்

Association of Tamils from Eelam and Sri Lanka in the United States of America

Welcome!

The Ilankai Tamil Sangam is a US based organisation of Tamil expatriates.

Formed in 1977, it is the oldest association of Eelam Ceylonese in the US, and its membership is open to anyone interested in the welfare of the Eelam Tamils.

The ITS has been maintaining a web site since December 1996. What started out as a simple site (URL www.sangam.org) has evolved into a large, yet easy to navigate store of information.

The core of the site is the large collection of analysis articles, covering various aspects of the Tamil question, from military analysis of the ongoing conflict to political discussions.

Notably, a collection of articles and press releases from the Action Group of Tamils in Colombo (AGOTIC) are provided, giving a 'local' perspective on the Tamil question. Some of these are unpublished, and all make interesting reading, particularly for those seeking a more thourough understanding of the more recent political developments in the conflict.

A set of articles on the Sri Lankan government's much vaunted 'Devolution Proposals' are also presented. These take a critical look at the proposals (or what's been unveiled so far) from the perspective of the Tamil people's political rights.

Some articles looking at the human rights issue are included, including a recent situation report from TULF MP Joseph Pararajasingham, which was submitted as an open letter to the US government.

For those seeking a historic perspective on the Tamil question, a 'Fact Book' section provides historical documents (including the major 'peace agreements'). A time line is also provided, marking the major developments in the Eelam Tamils' recent history from the start of western colonisation.

Articles from the ITS newsletter, the 'Tamil Voice' (published quarterly) are also on the site.

The site provides links to major news services, other Eelam and Tamil sites, some human rights sites (chosen from the perspective of Eelam Tamils) and to web sites of other struggles for self determination.

The ITS site is a treasure trove of information (did you know that Tamil Eelam is twice the geographical size of the Lebanon, with only 20% more people?). Those new to the Tamil question and those who've followed it for some time will find it useful. ■

Housing Association launches Tamil survey

A major city-wide survey is underway by the the well-known Tamil Community Housing Association Ltd. — a leading housing team giving support to London's Tamils.

The 11-year old organisation has backing for the survey from many London boroughs.

Interviewers are now approaching Tamil residents in and around the capital's boroughs of Brent, Lewisham, Walthamforest and Wandsworth gathering information that they assure will remain confidential.

"We've recognised that the Tamil community's needs have been changing which is what precipitated this ambitious comprehensive survey," said Gera Patel, one of the project's researchers. She added, "We're trying to assess the housing and support needs of the Tamil community and our aim is to conduct interview questionnaires with one thousand people across London".

The association's chairman Dr. Sabanathan is convinced the out" come of this major research will enhance the agency's ability to spread itself across London and provide housing to the community's needy. ■

TCHA, 1st Floor, Anna House, 214-216 High Road, Tottenham, London N15 4NP, Tel: 0181 365 0892 Fax: 0181 365 0895

Australian M.P. supports Tamils' Right to Self-destermination

(From HANSARD, Parliamentary Debates. House of Representatives Commonwealth of Australia - 28 August 1997)

MR.PAUL ZAMMIT M.P.

(Lowe) (5.51 p.m.)

I rise tonight to bring to the attention of the Australian nation a genocide occurring not far from our shores. I refer to the slow genocide that is happening in Sri Lanka aimed at the Tamil people. I have a sizeable Tamil community in my electorate and I have been watching the situation closely for the past 13 or 14 years, and all I can say is that what is happening there is a blight on humanity.

The latest thing that has occurred that I have to bring to the attention of this House and of the Australian nation is the deliberate bombings and indiscriminate shellings by the Sri Lankan armed forces. The latest carnage occurred on August 15, when two Sri Lankan Kfir bombers attacked a Catholic church, killing nine people, including a four-year old child, and wounding 15. In addition to that, on 9 July 1995 the Sri Lankan government bombed a Catholic church in Navaly killing 120 civilians. On 22 September 1995 Sri Lankan Puccara aircraft bombed a school in the village of Nagar Kovil, killing over 40 people, including 25 children. On these occasions, as well as on 15 August 1997, the killing was deliberate.

Disappearances	**769**
Summary executions of Tamils	**1330**
Innocent Tamils injured	**2332**
Tamil women raped by Sri Lankan forces	**33**
Arbitrary detention of Tamils	**14,953**

I have a statement here issued in 1997. The source is the Tamil Centre for Human Rights report to the 53rd session of the UN Commission on Human Rights, Geneva. These are official figures of human rights violations of Tamil civilians by the present Sri Lankan government over a period of approximately 22 years. They are as follows: *(above)*

I want to read into the record a statement issued by Amnesty International. I am a member of Amnesty International and I know many members of this House are also long-time members. This statement was issued very recently by the International secretariat from the United Kingdom. They say :

"The level of "disappearances" in Sri Lanka has hit a new high, Amnesty International warned as the United Nations Commission on Human Rights examined the country's human rights record. Coinciding with the Sri Lankan government's pledge at the Commission that "full rigours of the law will be brought to bear" on the perpetrators of human rights violations, Amnesty International submitted more than 400 cases of "disappearances" to President Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga urging her to bring those responsible to justice. Since the security forces regained control over the Jaffna peninsula in northern Sri Lanka between late 1995 and early 1997, the total number of " "disappearances" reported to the organization had reached 648 - the highest number since 1990.

"That more than 600 "disappearances" can occur in one year despite the government's claim that it is addressing the problem is outrageous.This highlights the need for action to be taken now - to prevent these violations from continuing", Amnesty International said.

There is a clear pattern of the security forces resorting to "disappearances" in reprisal for attacks on the security forces by members of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) In one incident which occurred on 19 July 1996, the day after the LTTE attacked the Mullaitivu army camp, at least 40 young men "disappeared" after they were rounded up by army personnel in Kaithady and surrounding villages in the Themarachchi Division. They were allegedly taken to Navatkuli army camp but when relatives went to make inquiries, they were not given any information. Amnesty International fears that they may have been massacred.

There is a lot more I want to say about this issue, but I call on the Sri Lankan government to respect the human rights of all individuals, to respect the right that humans have to be treated as decent people and as decent humans in our society and their society as well. They have a responsibility to humanity, and these indiscriminate bombing of individuals who are innocent and not part of any war should be stopped and outlawed immediately by the world community.

I call on the Sri Lankan government to allow the Tamil people of Sri Lanka the right to "self-determination".

With Compliments

Raja & Co.

Solicitors

Administrators of Oaths

295 Balham High Road
Tooting Bec
London
SW17 7BA

Tel: 0181 - 682 2585
Fax: 0181 - 682 2575

Dwaraka

The shop that has
EVERYTHING
that you need

199 , The Broadway
Southall
Middx
UB1 7LZ

Tel: 0181-813 9126

ENGINE TEC MOTORS

SERVICING
CLUTCHES
BRAKES
ELECRICALS

OVERHAULING
BODY WORK
INSURANCE WORK
PRE MOT CHECKS

SKILLED MECHANICS
FRIENDLY ADVICE

Tel: 0181 640 1230
or
0860 226 476 / 0860770945
Ask for: Vel or Rajan

339C London Road
Mitcham
Surrey CR4 4BE

TRUST TRAVEL LIMITED

IATA
91245770

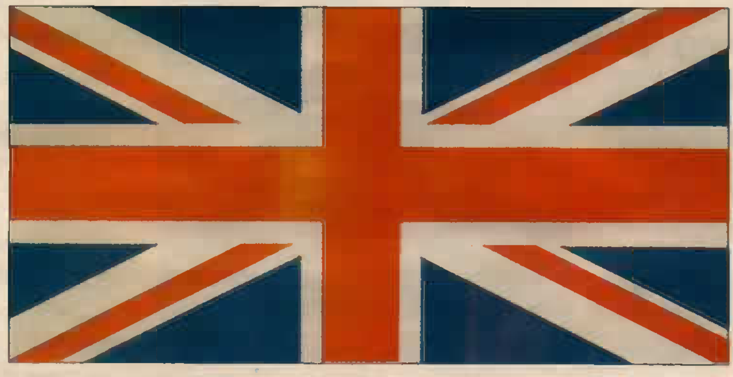
ATOL
4234

Special Air Fares Available To All Worldwide Destinations

Tel: (0171) 287 3200
Fax: (0171) 287 3111

3rd Floor, 205 Wardour Street
London W1V 3FA

Scots, Welsh and English Are there no British ?



Apparently not, according to a recent reader survey made by the London newspaper, the SUNDAY TIMES. The Scots and Welsh have opted for separate assemblies, and now, not even the English, at least the young ones, feel British any more, according to the Survey.

Two-thirds of 1500 teen-agers interviewed across England said they were English, rather than British. Asked where they lived, 88 per cent of the teen-agers questioned, said England. A patriotic 8 per cent replied Britain, and the rest said either the United Kingdom or Europe !

The responses also underlined the gulf between youngsters and the over-50s who lived through World War II. A parallel study of over 50s found that a majority still felt British and identified with the "national anthem and the bulldog".

Most of the 58.4 million British are English: England's population is 48.7 million

The Scots voted decisively for a separate Parliament on September 11 in the biggest jolt to the United Kingdom of England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland since Ireland got independence in 1922. The Welsh in the following week gave a lukewarm endorsement to having a less powerful Assembly. "The things that make up the British national identity are largely gone", Neil Ferguson, an Oxford University historian told the SUNDAY TIMES. "The political trend towards devolution will encourage that".

Israelis 'were once terrorists'

The widow of assassinated Israeli premier Yitzhak Rabin declared recently that her countrymen were 'once terrorists'.

Israelis should not expect Palestinian president Yasser Arafat to succeed 100 percent at fighting terrorism, said Leah Rabin.

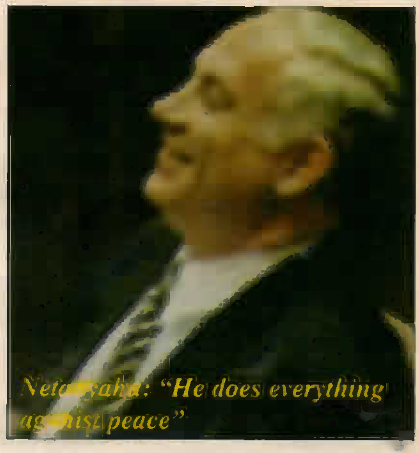
Speaking before a meeting with visiting U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, she added: 'I have doubts about how much terrorism can be uprooted.

'We were also terrorists once and they didn't uproot us. Despite all the efforts of the British Army we went on with terrorism. It's possible to try 100 per cent, but it doesn't ensure 100 per cent success,' claimed Mrs Rabin, who husband was gunned down in Tel Aviv in November 1995 by a Right-wing religious Jew opposed to peace talks with the Palestinians.

If you wait and see until there is 100 per cent success in uprooting terrorism, it appears to me that peace will get father and father away before our very eyes,' added the widow. 'That is my assessment.'

Mrs Rabin has attacked Right-wing Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu at her husband's funeral.

She has accused him of creating an 'incendiary climate' that led to the assassination. Asked if Natanyahu wanted peace, Mrs Rabin replied: 'Allow me to express doubt. He does every thing against it.'



Netanyahu: "He does everything against peace"

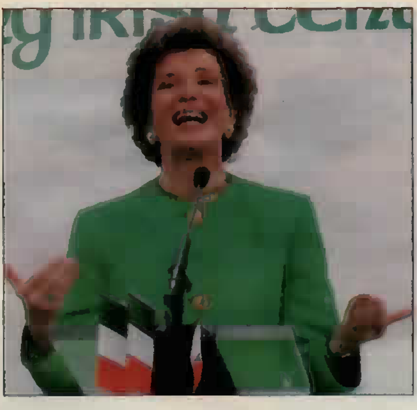
Netanyahu has insisted that any peace deals depend on Arafat's clamping down on militants.

Albright, on a mission to breathe life into the Middle East peace initiative, battered by suicide attacks that have killed 20 Israelies since late July, had talks with Arafat.

During the three-hour session she demanded that he cracked down on Moslem militants.

From head of State to head of Human Rights body

Ireland's first female head of state, Mary Robinson is today the head of the United Nations High Commission for Human Rights. On September 12 she quit office in Ireland, and was soon headed for the airport and Geneva to take up her new appointment.



Mary Robinson made the role of president into one that championed the welfare of those on the edges of Irish society: prisoners, abused women, rural areas, gays and lesbians; the right to divorce, and woman's right to abortion. Educated at Trinity College, Dublin, and in law at Harvard College during the 1960s, she is the first Irish chief of state to meet with the British monarch since Ireland's founding in 1949.

Immensely popular with her people, she is reported to have transformed Ireland from a sometimes insular society, dominated by the Catholic Church and the patronising chauvinism of its male politicians into a modern country.Women in particular won a sense of confidence for the first time.

Mary Robinson has a talent for human contact, leads an exemplary domestic life, not least because she is a Catholic married to a Protestant. At one time she was widely touted to become the Secretary General of the United Nations, but the U.S. government clinched the job for Kofi Annan.

The Indian woman in the literary limelight

She comes from Kerala in India. She is 37. She lives in Delhi sharing a 2-room flat with her film director husband and two dachshunds. She wrote a novel - her first - titled THE GOD OF SMALL THINGS, which has now thrust her into the headlines. The name is Arundhati Roy.

Her book has been number one in the bestseller lists in Britain, Australia and Canada, has sold over 100,000 copies in the United States, and about 400,000 world-wide. And recently this year's Booker Prize judges chose it for their short list.

In India too, where Arundhati continues to live, the book has been a runaway success, selling 35,000 copies in English. But alas, foreign acclaim has been overshadowed by vicious attacks on her in her own country. She is accused of defaming the grand old man of the Communist Party in Kerala, E.M.S.Namboodiripad and a man called Sabu Thomas has taken her to the local District Court on a charge of obscenity in her book. The charge was that a scene in the novel portrays a sexual encounter between a Christian woman and a Hindu "untouchable".

For a woman who was given a half a million pound advance for her book, to be followed by such international recognition, it must be indeed distressing to be hounded in her own home state. But unlike other Indian literary celebrities whose fame had propelled them to wealthy living in the West, Arundhati it appears has no plans to leave India. When Peter Popham of INDEPENDENT ON SUNDAY met her, she was sitting cross-legged in her modest Delhi flat, no make-up, no jewellery, no pose.

Married

Saraseesan Gnanamoly

Saraseesan, son of Mr & Mrs.K.Nadarajah, and Gnanamoly, daughter of Dr.and Mrs.V.Yoganathan, formerly of Brown Road, Jaffna, at the London Murugan Temple, Manor Park, London, on Sunday 7th September.

* * * * *

Shanthakumar Sivatharshini

Shanthakumar, son of Mr. and Mrs.N.Vigneswaralingam and Sivatharshini, daughter of Mr. and Mrs.V.Ramalingam at Kathiresan hall, Colombo 4, Sri Lanka, on 3 September.

* * * * *

Tharsha's Arangetram

On Saturday 20th September at Waltham Forest Assembly Hall, Sangeetha Vidwan Sreemathi Pathmini Gunaseelan's 13th student graduated on to her Bharatha Natyam stage. Selvi Tharsha Varathalingam of Gants Hill presented her two and a half hour solo performance with polish and flair to a full hall of at least 1000 art lovers and friends.

The name of Tharsha's guru, Smt.Pathmini Gunaseelan is now synonymous with all that is talented and innovative in the world of Bharatha Natyam. Her commitment to aesthetic perfection and presence reflect in each budding artiste she trains, and emerged proudly in Tharsha that night.

Accompanying her were UK's leading eastern orchestral artistes and and "Tamil Eelam's" leading male vocalist Sangeetha Pooshanam Pon Suntharalingam. On Mirudangam was Nathamani Muthu Sivarajah on the violin Sangeetha Vidwan Sreemathi Kalaivani Indrakumar, on the Veena Sangeetha Pooshanam Komathi Subramaniam, on the Flute Sri Pichaiappah Gnanavarthan and on the Morsing Sri Kandiah Sithamparanathan

- A correspondent.

Obituaries

Prins Solomons

16-10-1942 - 18-09-1997

Prins Solomons, formerly of the Dept. of Irrigation, Sri Lanka and resident of Chavakachcheri, passed away at the age of 54, after a brief illness in London.

Prins was the son of the late Mr.I.T.Solomons also of the Dept. of Irrigation and of Pushpam Solomons. He was educated at St.Johns College, Jaffna and served with the Irrigation Dept. He took early retirement and joined his children, his mother and sister in the U.K.

Prins is survived by his wife Ranee, children Preene and Anton, his mother Pushpam Solomons and sister Chandra.

24 Merton Avenue,Northholt,Middx. UB5 4QF, U.K. Tel. 0181 8641745.

* * * * *

Dr.A.Subramaniam

Dr.Arumugam Subramaniam (74) retired General Practitioner, Kurunegala, Sri Lanka, expired on 1 September 1997.

He was the husband of Ragu and father of Vijayalalkshmi (Canada), Sivanantha (USA), Sivagini (Kurunegala) and father-in-law of Shan, Sumathini and Ravi, and grandfather of Geetha, Sasika, Ganesh, Menaka and Pramukh.

Cremation took place at the General Cemetery, Kurunegala on 2 September.

S.Sivasubramaniam, 19948 Stoneypoint Way Germantown, M.D. 20876, USA.

* * * * *

Mrs.Neethirajah

Thilagawathi Neethirajah, wife of ex-Senator and Chairman, Greenlands Hotel Ltd. T.Neethirajah, died of heart attack following robbery at her Colombo home by armed men claiming to be CID officers. The incident took place on 24 September.

She is the mother of Padminidevi, Amirthambigai and Thanarajah and mother-in-law of V.R.Vadivetkarasan, Arulananthan and Jeyanthi

Funeral took place on Sunday 28 September at the General Cemetery, Kanatte.

89, New Chetty Street, Kotahena.

* * * * *

Obituaries

B.Gnanasanmugam

Balasundaram Gnanasanmugam (65), from Tinnevely, Jaffna, retired Reformer Consultant at Kvaerner Process Technology, London, passed away on 3 September 1997.

He was the eldest son of the late Murugesu Balasundaram, advocate and one-time M.P. for Kopay and late Mrs.Sinnammah Balasundaram, husband of Vimala and father of Naresh and Shamini, brother of late Yogasundaram, Dr.Balakrishnan (Sydney), Sivanandhasundaram (Canada), Sundhari, and Yogeswari (Sydney), and brother-in-law of late Thillainathan, Indra, Natkunasingam and Yasotha; and son-in-law of late Mr. & Mrs.Sundarampillai.

Gnana was a mechanical engineer attached to the Dept. of Agriculture in Sri Lanka for a short period before emigrating to UK. He spent most of his period in London as Senior Engineer in Heat Transfer Equipment at the Davey Process Technology until his retirement in 1962; and thereafter as advisory consultant to the company. Gnana was deeply attached to the Tamil cause.

The funeral took place in Surrey on 7 September.

86, Elmfield Way Sanderstead,
Croydon, Surrey CR2 OEF U.K.

* * * * *

Ernest S.Appadurai

Born: 26 January 1919
Died: 21 September 1997

Ernest Appadurai who joined Ceylon government service as a Labour Officer rose up to become Commissioner of Labour. After retirement he served the International Labour Organisation (ILO) in Geneva for 17 years.

He was the husband of late Eileen nee Aiyadurai, and leaves four sons, Ranjit, Ravin, Rohan, Suresh, and daughter Anushkar.The funeral took place in Scarborough, Canada.

* * * * *

V.C.Motilal Nehru

Vallipuram Coomarasamy Motilal Nehru, President's Counsel, on 31 August in Colombo. He was the husband of Neelambikai, and father of Sugumaran, Vijayaluxmy, Sumathee and Jawaharlal Nehru.

* * * * *

A.S.Navaratnarajah

Mr.A.S.Navaratnarajah passed away in Australia recently at the age of 73. He entered the Ceylon Civil Service after a brilliant career at Hartley College, Point Pedro and at the University College, Colombo where he obtained First Class Honours in Chemistry.

He rose to high rank as Deputy Director of the Public Works Department (PWD), and finally, Director of Commerce and Industries. After retirement, he served the UNDP for 11 years.

He leaves three sons, Sivaramanan, Rajaramanan, Yogaramanan and daughter Mrs.Bhamini Neelan.

* * * * *

In Memoriam

Viswalingam Shanmugavadivel,

Rtd. SPHI of Valvettiturai.

Born: 31.07.1922
Departed: 28.09.1990

Sadly missed and fondly remembered on the 6th anniversary of his passing away by his loving wife Ratnaganthi; children Amirthakala (Canada), Ratnakumar and Swarnakala (both of Chennai), Nandakumar (UK), Premkumar and Uthayakumar (both of Germany), Sivakumar and Sugirthakala (both of UK); sons-in-laws Subash chandrabose (Canada), Ponnam balam (Switzerland),and Gobiratnam (UK) ; daughters-in-law Chandraleka and Atputhamalar (both of Chennai), Yogamathi and Yogaranjani (both of Germany) and Helen (UK), grandchildren Kavitha, Janitha, Jawagar, Sitharth, Aravinth, Anusha, Kousigan, Shobana, Pradipa, Thushyanthini, Priyanthini,Shanmugapriyan, Satheesan, Shamini, Sathurya, Prashanthan, Nivedita, Ainkaran, Nishanthan, Jeevathan, Mahison and Cheran.

9, Portland House, High Trees,
Tulse Hill, London SW2 3PD.

* * * * *

SHANKAR

SHANKAR
Manasa Poigayile
BAGUNATHAN
Classical Vocal

KARNATIC CLASSICAL
INSTRUMENTAL
Kunnakudi Vaidyanathan
VIOLIN

For
Tamil
Classical
Music

Charming Ragas
disc

Manufactured &
Marketed by

Shankar & Co.

SHANKAR
CLASSICAL MUSIC PROGRAMME VOL. I
by:
K.J. Jesudas

CLASSICAL
LIVE CONCERT
K.J. YESUDAS

231, Northholt Road
South Harrow
Middlesex
England
Tel: + 44 (0) 181 426 8960
Fax: + 44 (0) 181 861 5248

2390, Eglington Avenue-East
Unit 234 Scarborough
Canada
Tel: 0416 750 2370

7, Grimsby Court
Doncaster East
Victoria 3109
Australia
Tel: 0984 17130

Majid Cassette
P.O.Box 4482
Deira
Dubai UAE
Tel: 721 669

Two views of Edinburgh castle

Printed by Tim Press Tel: 0181-640 2885